HALL OF FAME: VIRGIL HILL'S UNLIKELY JOURNEY TO CANASTOTA

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STATE OF THE GAME

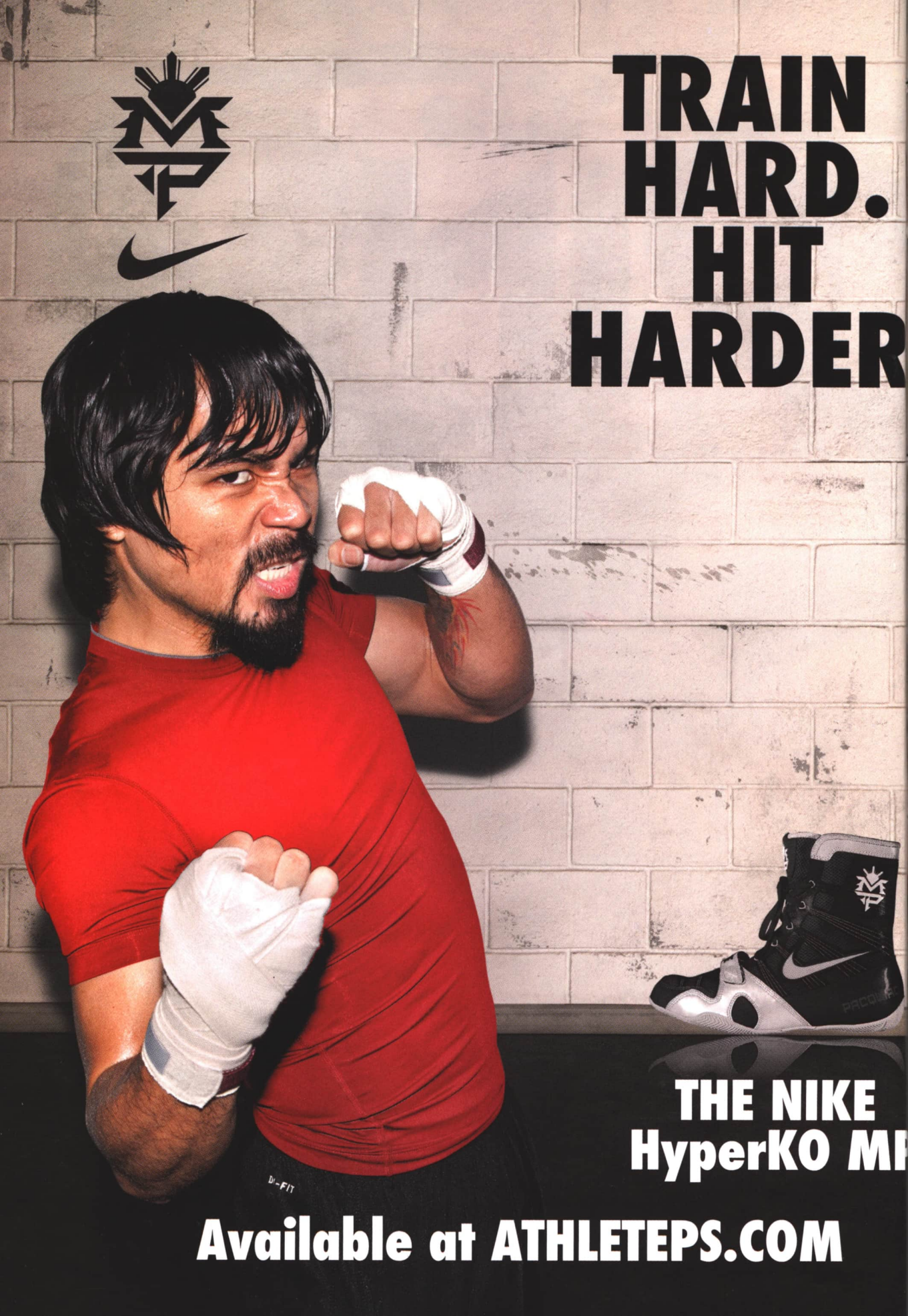
OUR IN-DEPTH AND EXCLUSIVE DIVISION-BY-DIVISION ANALYSIS

FRESH START
NEW USA BOXING BOSS OPTIMISTIC AMERICANS WILL REBOUND

HBO VS. SHOWTIME
BATTLE OF NETWORKS HEATS UP WITH MAYWEATHER'S DEFECTION

PLOTS HIS FUTURE

IONAL FIGHTERS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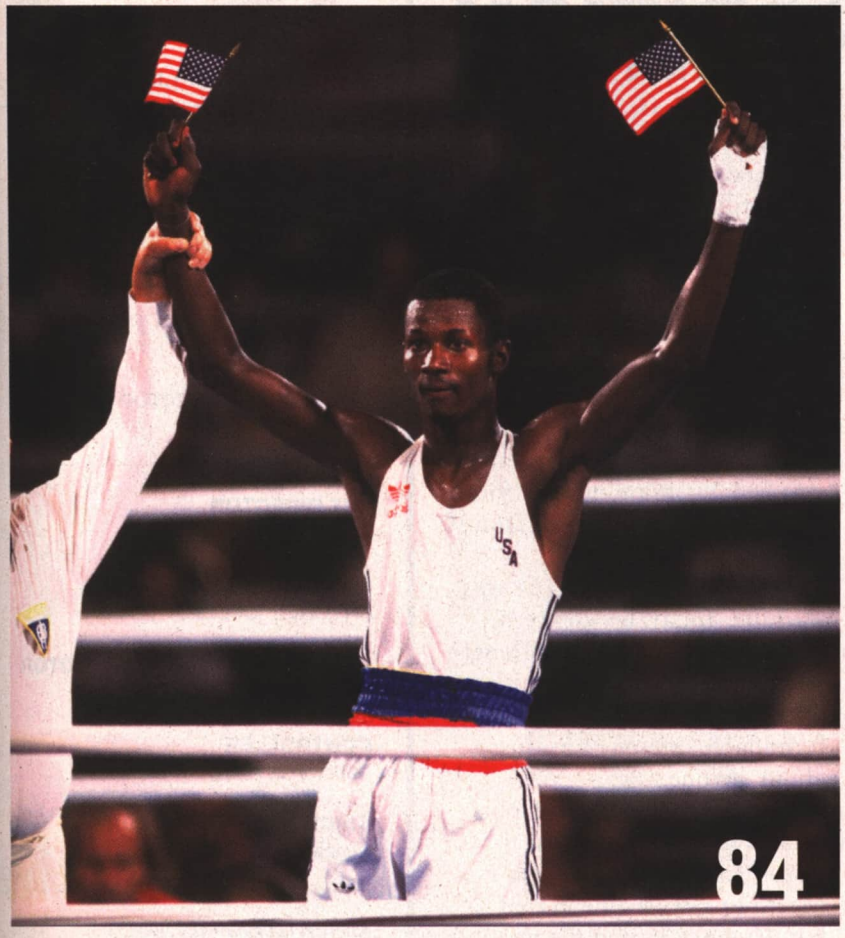

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Breland: Getty Images; Haye: Matthew Lewis/Getty Images

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CANELO WINS PRAISE
Saul "Canelo" Alvarez earned the RING title and grudging respect with his victory over Austin Trout. Read RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer's column. GO TO: http://bit.ly/ZexCYc or scan the QR Code.

Q&A: ANTHONY OGOGO
RingTV.com caught up with former British Olympian Anthony Ogogo before he knocked out Kieron Gray in his pro debut on April 27. GO TO: http://bit.ly/184jZ1M or scan the QR Code.

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WORTHY OF A PROUD TRADITION

The future of Mexican boxing was murky as Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales and Juan Manuel Marquez began to age. That fearsome threesome was the post-Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. face of the sport south of the U.S. border, with a collective 20 world titles among them.

Who was on the horizon, though? What young Mexican or Mexicans would carry on the nation's proud pugilistic tradition?

The two biggest names – Saul "Canelo" Alvarez and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. – didn't seem to hold much promise a few years ago. They seemed to be too limited in terms of talent and development. And the fact that matchmakers coddled them reinforced the perception.

I, for one, never believed either would amount to much. I was wrong.

Alvarez had been fed vulnerable foes. Each of his 42 opponents before April 20 was either a journeyman, past his prime or at a distinct size disadvantage. Here's the thing, though: Alvarez, who had no amateur career, was learning. He was working hard in the gym and gleaning valuable experience on fight nights.

Thus, he was ready when a real challenge came along. He stunned many observers by outboxing a boxer when he defeated Austin Trout – a fighter some close to him wanted to avoid – by a unanimous decision on April 20 before almost 40,000 at the Alamodome in San Antonio.

Alvarez's performance wasn't as scintillating as many in his past but, in a challenge as demanding as this, the victory spoke volumes. He proved worthy of his predecessors.

The younger Chavez seemed to be riding the coattails of his famous father, using his name to make a good living. Junior also was beating up on inferior foes but didn't seem to be special in any way.

However, like Alvarez, he was learning. Today, his combination of unusual physical strength and resilience combined with improved skills makes him a formidable opponent for just about anyone.

Chavez struggled for 11-plus rounds in a one-sided loss to boxer extraordinaire Sergio Martinez – no shame in that – but demonstrated in the final moments how dangerous he can be even against a future Hall of Famer. He is more than just the son of a great fighter.

Of course, no one knows how much Alvarez and Chavez will accomplish before they're finished.

Alvarez is only 22, a boxing toddler still finding his footing. And Chavez is 27; his best years lie ahead. Only time will tell whether they can even approach the accomplishments of Barrera, Morales and Marquez and many more of their noted countrymen.

One thing seems clear now, though: Mexican boxing is in good hands. RING

The RING

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Mike Alvarado (right) surprised Brandon Rios with his clever tactics and came away with an impressive victory in their rematch in March.

EVERLAST
TR
TOP

Guillermo Rigondeaux (right) gave an inspired demonstration of boxing to dominate Nonito Donaire and win THE RING junior featherweight title in April.

Naoki Fukuda

Saul "Canelo" Alvarez (in black trunks) passed his biggest test by outpointing talented Austin Trout before almost 40,000 at the Alamodome in April.

TROUT

SHOWTIME sports

GATTI NOT GREAT

I believe the International Boxing Hall of Fame should only honor the truly great fighters, not just the good or very good. I was a huge Arturo Gatti fan and always enjoyed his exciting style and respected his heart, courage and determination. However, it takes more than that to be considered great. Matthew Saad Muhammad possessed the same spirit and heart as Gatti but demonstrated it at the highest level and against the division's best fighters. When faced with elite level opponents, Gatti was easily handled and often stopped. He had a great series of fights against Mickey Ward, but Ward was not an elite level fighter. If excitement is the criterion for entering the Boxing Hall of Fame, then Ray Mancini, Vinny Pazienza, Iran Barkley, Earnie Shavers, Troy Dorsey and Jorge Paez should all be inducted. They were all exciting and very good fighters. Gatti possessed great qualities but he was not a great fighter. There is a difference.

Patrick Mascoe
Ottawa, Canada

HEART WAS GREATNESS

I really enjoyed your article about Arturo Gatti (April 2013). He was an old school fighter, cut from the same cloth as Joe Frazier, Evander Holyfield, Jake LaMotta and The Rock (Rocky Marciano) from the 1950s heavyweight division. His heart was his greatness. It is sad Gatti won't be at his day at the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Welcome to the Mount Olympus of boxing.

Jason Bouc
Omaha, Neb.

TOO MUCH WHINING?

I think too much is made of the judging problem in boxing. I have watched hundreds of fights and will probably watch hundreds more. Every sport that has judging has the same issues as boxing – figure skating, gymnastics, etc. Even if corruption is totally obliterated from the face of the earth and every judge could watch each round five times from every angle, I am certain we would still have "bad" decisions. I watch because I love the entertainment of the brutal honesty between the combatants and their efforts to come out victorious. I watch because I admire these people and wish I could still be one of them. I watch for the unexpected. I watch to see the sweetest of sciences meeting the fiercest of passions. I do not watch to see judges. Besides, if you want it bad enough, you can always try to take it out of the judges' hands as Juan Manuel Marquez did against Manny Pacquiao.

Kyle Federowich
Edmonton, Canada

STILL VICIOUS?

Most Recently Victor Ortiz has been trading 10-9 rounds for 9s and 10s on the dance floor while the jaw that Josesito Lopez broke heals. Couple that with his new business venture – his name on a bottle of cologne – and you would think Ortiz is following fellow fighters Oscar De La Hoya and Floyd Mayweather Jr. into superstardom as a crossover star. Yet as bottles of VO (his signature scent) get knocked off the shelf like one of his opponents, one has to wonder: Is Ortiz enjoying his time away from the sport a little too much? What is going through the mind of a young man entering his prime who used to scour trashcans and dumpsters to find food to feed himself and his siblings? Is this simply a case of him trying to enjoy himself while marketing himself to the masses? Or something more? Does the rags to riches kid still have that hungry, angry fighter inside? Or are we seeing the new Victor Ortiz, a fighter who used boxing to make it out of the slums and, now that he has, sees new, less painful ways to make a living? Only time will tell if Victor Ortiz is still "Vicious."

Greg Rowe
Denver, Colo.

WRITE TO THE RING!

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E-mailed letters will include a writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

FOR THE RECORD

The answer to the Quick Quiz in the June 2013 issue was incorrect. THE RING stated that Floyd Patterson and Ingemar Johansson were the only heavyweights to fight one another for the world championship three times. In fact, Jersey Joe Walcott and Ezzard Charles fought four times for the title. And Tommy Burns defended the championship three times against Bill Squires.

THE RING erroneously stated in the story entitled "It's Our Heritage," in the May 2013 issue, that actress Mamie Van Doren was one of Art Aragon's four wives; in fact, they dated. And we described Sugar Ramos as a "Cuban-Mexican," which might've been misleading. He was 100 percent Cuban but fled his native land and made Mexico his permanent home after Fidel Castro came to power.

Also in the May 2013 issue, in the item entitled "The 10 Best," we mistakenly duplicated a capsule on Mikey Garcia and left another on Brandon Rios out of the magazine. The capsule on Rios, deemed at the time to be the No. 3 Mexican-American fighter, should've read as follows:

Brandon Rios
31-0-1, 23 KOs
Brandon Rios, the former WBA lightweight titleholder, rose to the top of the 135-pound division with impressive victories over Anthony Peterson, Miguel Acosta and Urbano Antillon before outgrowing the weight class. The relentless 26-year-old slugger rebounded from a controversial split nod over Richar Abril with a savage seventh-round stoppage of fellow unbeaten contender Mike Alvarado in his 140-pound debut.

Note: The feature that included the Rios capsule appeared before he lost to Alvarado in their rematch.

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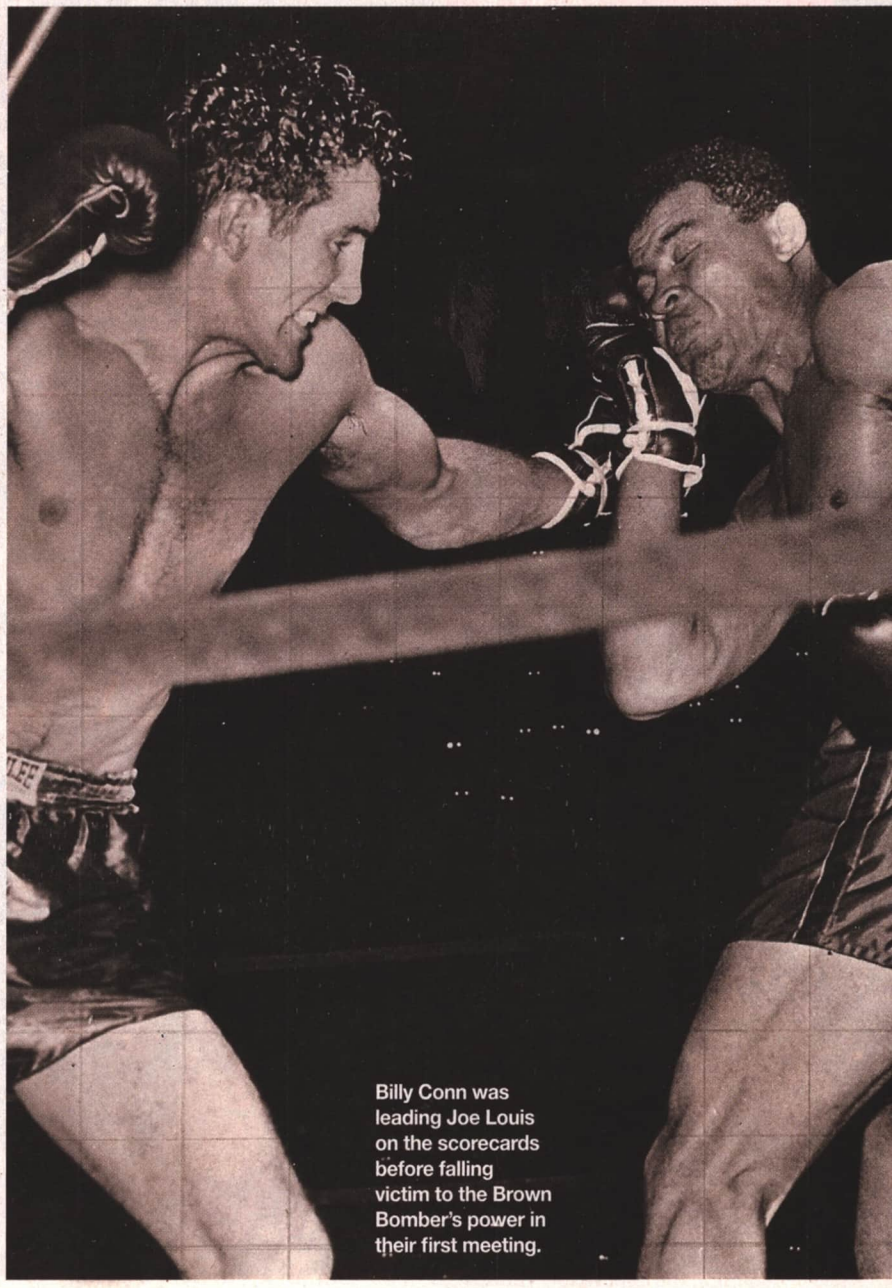
JABS & STRAIGHT WRITES

BY THOMAS HAUSER

THE GREAT BILLY CONN



Billy Conn was leading Joe Louis on the scorecards before falling victim to the Brown Bomber's power in their first meeting.

When Bernard Hopkins defeated Tavoris Cloud, he reclaimed a portion of the light heavyweight crown at age 48. At the other end of the spectrum, Billy Conn won the whole thing at age 21.

Conn grew up poor in Pittsburgh, a fact he confirmed with the observation, "Sure, I was poor. You ever see a rich kid fighting?"

On a similar note, Johnny Ray (Conn's manager), declared early in his fighter's career, "Billy is a good kid. I hope he doesn't become a gentleman until after we make some money. Being a gentleman softens you up in this business."

Conn defeated Fred Apostoli twice in 1939. His purse for the second bout was $10,467, which prompted him to say, "I'd heard there was this much money in the world, but I was always puzzled just how to get it."

More importantly, Conn's victories over Apostoli put him in position to battle Melio Bettina for the world light heavyweight title. On July 13, 1939, he scored a 15-round decision over Bettina. Then, after 10 more wins, he went up in weight to challenge Joe Louis for the heavyweight throne.

"Louis is a great fighter," Ray proclaimed, heralding his own fighter's chances. "But everything's got to end. The greatest athletes in every sport fade eventually. Around Pittsburgh, you'd of had your head broke if you said that someday Honus Wagner would be just another bum at shortstop. But champions always collapse."

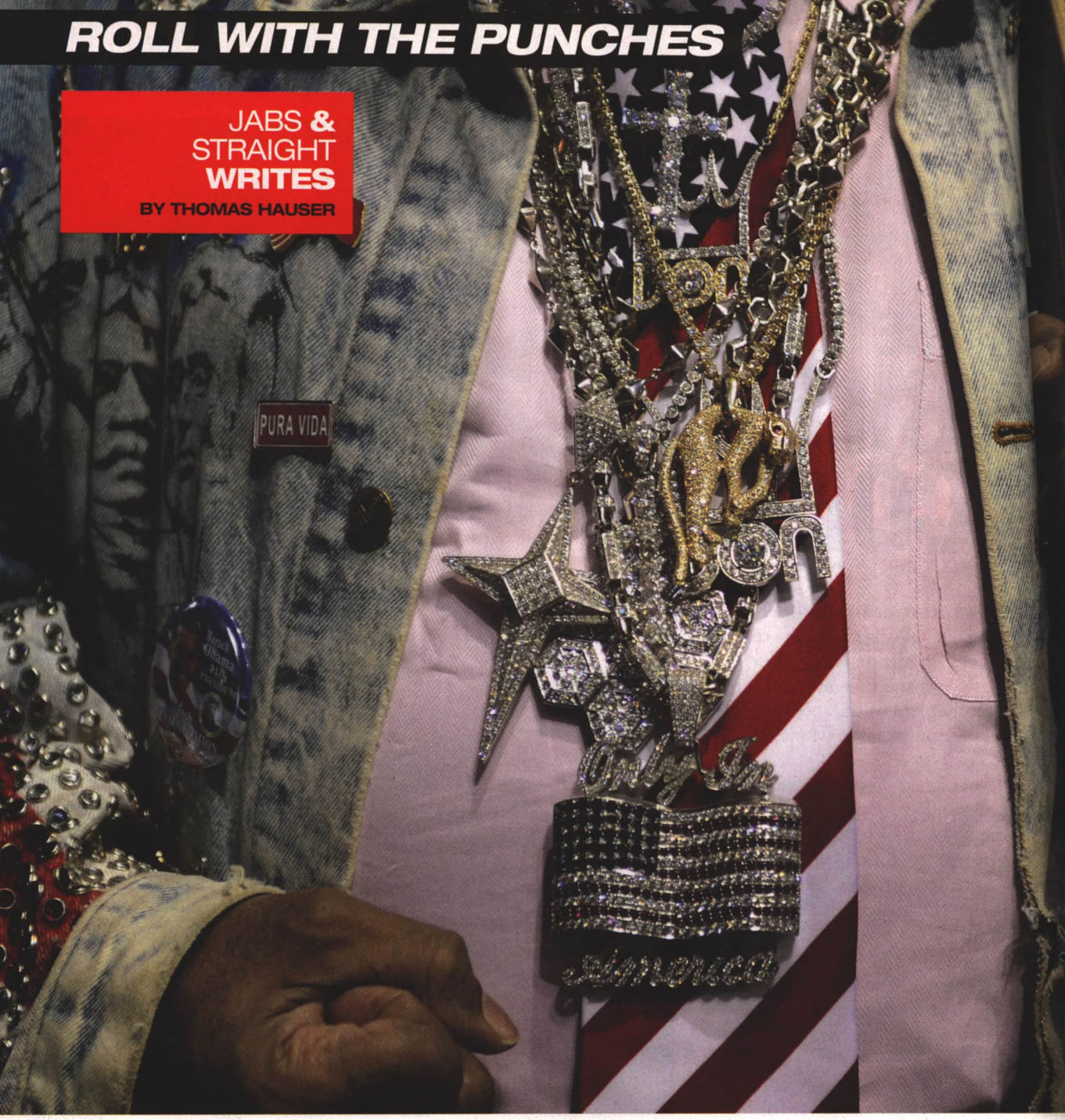
Conn came close against Louis. When they met in the ring on June 18, 1941, he was leading on the scorecards going into the 13th round. Then the Brown Bomber rallied to knock him out. Five years later, they fought again, but Conn was a shell of his former self. Louis dominated throughout their rematch en route to an eighth-round knockout.

Years later, Conn would say of his conqueror, "Joe Louis is the only guy I know who never rapped anyone, never said a bad word about anyone."

THE RING MAGAZINE ©

JABS & STRAIGHT **WRITES**

BY THOMAS HAUSER



THE SOFTER SIDE OF DON KING

I have a photo of my mother with Muhammad Ali. It was taken in my apartment in 1989, when they met for the first time.

"You're so much bigger than I thought," my mother said when they came face to face.

"Did you call me a n-----?" Muhammad demanded.

"No! I said, 'bigger.'"

"She called me a n-----," Muhammad growled.

And he advanced menacingly toward her, slamming a closed fist into the palm of his hand until he was almost on top of her. Then he flashed that wonderful Muhammad Ali smile and reached out to embrace her. Howard Bingham (Ali's longtime friend and personal photographer) caught the moment on film.

Seventeen years later, I brought my mother to a Don King press conference at Madison Square Garden. They spoke briefly, and I

The flamboyant promoter Don King also has a charming side.

recorded the occasion in an article entitled "My Eighty-Year-Old Mother Meets Don King." Since then, whenever I see Don, he asks, "How's your momma?"

Flash-forward to March 9, 2013, at Barclays Center in Brooklyn. Tavoris Cloud (King's fighter) was defending his IBF belt against Bernard Hopkins. Don and I have had our differences over the years, and at times they've been heated. So I was particularly appreciative when he allowed me to experience March 9 in a special way.

Don said that I could stay with him from the moment he entered the arena until the end of the night for an article I was writing. That included several hours in Cloud's dressing room and also sitting next to Don during the fight (he always sits front row center facing the primary television camera).

I wanted to thank Don for allowing me into his world. So I had the photo of my mother and Ali made into a greeting card and wrote a message of appreciation inside. At the beginning of the evening, I gave the card to Don. He opened it, looked at the photo, and exclaimed, "That's two of my favorite people!"

The Don King charm lives on.

★

And a footnote to the evening.

Arthur Mercante Jr. refereed two fights on the Hopkins-Cloud undercard. While I was waiting for Don to arrive at Barclays, Mercante shared a memory with me.

"The day after my father passed away," Arthur reminisced, "the phone rang. I picked it up and a voice said, 'This is Don King.' I thought it was a crank call. I told him, 'Look, my father just died. I'm not in the mood for jokes.' And the person on the phone said, 'No, it's really me. I'll prove it to you.'"

Mercante smiled as he continued his tale.

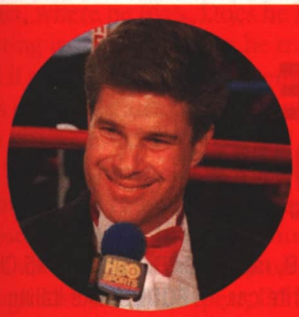
"My father had a chinning bar in the doorway to the kitchen of our home. If any of us did something wrong, or sometimes if we just went into the kitchen to eat, he'd tell us, 'Do 10 chins.' So the voice on the phone says, 'I came to your parent's home one time and my hair hit the chinning bar in the kitchen and your father told me I had to do 10 chins.'"

"OK," Arthur told the caller. "I believe it's you."

"Your father was one crazy white man," King added. RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book (*And the New: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

Correction: The June 2013 Quiz Quiz incorrectly referenced Floyd Patterson and Ingemar Johansson as the only two men who fought each other for the heavyweight championship three times. Ezzard Charles and Jersey Joe Walcott share that distinction, as do Tommy Burns and Bill Squires.



Jim Lampley

QUICK QUIZ

1. WHO WAS THE RECIPIENT OF BOXING'S FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP BELT?
2. WHO WERE MATTIE CHAPMAN, ELIZABETH THORNTON, KATHRYN TURNER, ALICE TRAVIS AND JOAN HARDY?
3. WHO DID JIM LAMPLEY REPLACE WHEN HE BECAME THE BLOW-BY-BLOW COMMENTATOR FOR HBO BOXING IN 1988?

QUICK QUIZ ANSWERS 1. A: Tom Cribb of England, who was given a lion-skin sash with silver claws.; 2. Archie Moore's five wives; 3. Lampley replaced Barry Tompkins.

King: TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP/Getty Images; Lampley: Al Bello/ALLSPORT

ADVANCED DEGREES

Degrees of separation between fighters of today and their predecessors. This month: Angel Luis Firpo, the Argentine star who engaged Jack Dempsey in a 1923 classic, to countryman and current champion Sergio Martinez.

ANGEL LUIS FIRPO
fought …

Arturo Godoy, who fought …

Harold Johnson, who fought …

Doug Jones, who fought …

Muhammad Ali, who fought …

Larry Holmes, who fought …

Evander Holyfield, who fought …

John Ruiz, who fought …

Roy Jones Jr., who fought …

Bernard Hopkins, who fought …

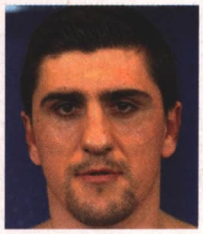
Kelly Pavlik, who fought …

SERGIO MARTINEZ

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

By **Anson Wainwright**



MARCO HUCK

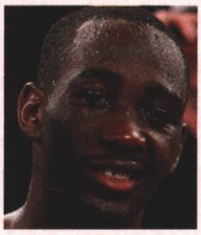
WBO CRUISERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

MUSIC: I am relatively open-minded when it comes to music. I like Balkan folk music and house, to name a few. ★ **CAR:** I have a weakness for sports cars. I have already had more than 30 different cars in my life. ★ **FOOD:** I love roast beef. ★ **TATTOOS:** Actually, I have none. But I wanted to get a lion on my chest when I was 18. Thankfully, my dad talked me out of it. ★ **ATHLETE (OUTSIDE BOXING):** Tiger Woods. ★ **MOVIE:** *Goodfellas.* ★ **VIDEO GAME:** My life is exciting enough. I have no need for video games.

DARREN BARKER

MIDDLEWEIGHT CONTENDER

MUSIC: I'm a big fan of John Mayer. I love real talent. And I'm a fan of the electric guitar. Hip-hop and house music to train to, though. ★ **CAR:** I drive a BMW X5, and my dream car would be an Aston Martin. I'm a James Bond wannabe. ★ **FOOD:** Absolutely love dim sum. I travelled to Hong Kong a while back and tried it there and have never looked back. Soft spot for fish and chips also. ★ **TATTOOS:** I have the top half of my back covered as a tribute to my brother that passed away [also a boxer]. It's a cross with praying hands holding rosary beads with rays of light and doves in the background. I also have a rose on my forearm with the name Scarlett underneath, which is my daughter's name, Scarlett Rose. ★ **ATHLETE (OUTSIDE BOXING):** As a huge Chelsea (football club) fan I would have to say all the lads that play for them. I'm a season ticket holder and know a lot of the players, and I also respect and admire the efforts they put into the team. Also David Beckham for the way he conducts himself on and off the field; he's a great role model. ★ **MOVIE:** *Gladiator* by a mile. I'm fascinated by the Roman Empire and the pure bravery of the gladiators and what they went through. And as a fighter myself I can in some ways relate to it. ★ **VIDEO GAME:** I'm not a gamer at all but my friends all play *FIFA*, so if I had to choose, it would be *FIFA* for them.



TERENCE CRAWFORD

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT PROSPECT

MUSIC: I like hip-hop, R&B, rap. ★ **CAR:** I drive a '95 Chevy Tahoe. I don't have a favorite car. ★ **FOOD:** I like Italian. I like pasta, lasagna, pizza. I like Chinese food, too.★ **TATTOOS:** No tattoos. ★ **ATHLETE (OUTSIDE BOXING):** Kobe Bryant. ★ **MOVIE:** *Menace II Society.* ★ **VIDEO GAME:** *NBA 2K13.*

Martinez: Jeff Bottari/Stringer; Huck: THOMAS KIENZLE/AFP/Getty Images; Barker: Scott Heavey/Getty Images

ADVANCED DEGREES

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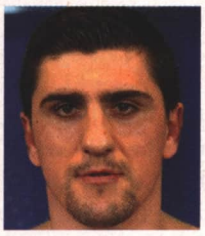
FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

By **Anson Wainwright**



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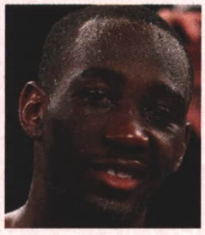
DARREN BARKER

MIDDLEWEIGHT CONTENDER

MUSIC: I'm a big fan of John Mayer. I love real talent. And I'm a fan of the electric guitar. Hip-hop and house music to train to, though. ★ **CAR:** I drive a BMW X5, and my dream car would be an Aston Martin. I'm a James Bond wannabe. ★ **FOOD:** Absolutely love dim sum. I travelled to Hong Kong a while back and tried it there and have never looked back. Soft spot for fish and chips also. ★ **TATTOOS:** I have the top half of my back covered as a tribute to my brother that passed away [also a boxer]. It's a cross with praying hands holding rosary beads with rays of light and doves in the background. I also have a rose on my forearm with the name Scarlett underneath, which is my daughter's name, Scarlett Rose. ★ **ATHLETE (OUTSIDE BOXING):** As a huge Chelsea (football club) fan I would have to say all the lads that play for them. I'm a season ticket holder and know a lot of the players, and I also respect and admire the efforts they put into the team. Also David Beckham for the way he conducts himself on and off the field; he's a great role model. ★ **MOVIE:** *Gladiator* by a mile. I'm fascinated by the Roman Empire and the pure bravery of the gladiators and what they went through. And as a fighter myself I can in some ways relate to it. ★ **VIDEO GAME:** I'm not a gamer at all but my friends all play *FIFA*, so if I had to choose, it would be *FIFA* for them.



TERENCE CRAWFORD

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT PROSPECT

MUSIC: I like hip-hop, R&B, rap. ★ **CAR:** I drive a '95 Chevy Tahoe. I don't have a favorite car. ★ **FOOD:** I like Italian. I like pasta, lasagna, pizza. I like Chinese food, too.★ **TATTOOS:** No tattoos. ★ **ATHLETE (OUTSIDE BOXING):** Kobe Bryant. ★ **MOVIE:** *Menace II Society.* ★ **VIDEO GAME:** *NBA 2K13.*

GOOD, BAD, WORSE

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

By **Michael Rosenthal**

GOOD

The U.S. Senate recently approved a resolution urging President Obama to posthumously pardon legendary heavyweight Jack Johnson, who was convicted in 1913 on trumped up charges of transporting a woman across state lines for immoral purposes. The real reason he was convicted? Because he was a black man who dared to live as he pleased during an intolerant time. He deserves the pardon. We've been down this road, though. The president was asked in 2009 to clear Johnson's name but didn't do so because justice officials urged him not to, saying pardons are meant for the living. I say we must take advantage of an opportunity to right a wrong.

BAD

The final rounds of the Saul "Canelo" Alvarez-Austin Trout fight in San Antonio should've been a thrilling conclusion to what appeared to be a close fight. Instead, the WBC's loathsome open scoring policy – in which the scoring is revealed to the corners after Rounds 4 and 8 – destroyed any potential drama. Thus, Alvarez knew he would win the fight if he stayed out of harm's way. And TV viewers were deprived of one of boxing's most compelling moments – learning who won the fight when the announcement is made – because commentators spilled the beans. Texas must learn to say no to WBC president Jose Sulaiman. It hurts the sport.

WORSE

Robert Guerrero has a license to possess a gun in California, where he lives. Does he have a compelling reason to bring it with him when he travels out of state, though? And if so, doesn't common sense tell you to check the laws of other states before flying to them? Duh. Guerrero was arrested on March 28 when he handed a locked gun box – complete with gun but no ammunition – to an airline employee before boarding a plane in New York, whose gun laws differ from those in California. He now faces up to four years in prison on felony charges. Although I'm no legal expert, I'd be surprised if he spent a day in jail. But there's a lesson here: Think.

A MONTHLY BOXING LIST:

TEN

Boxers in the International Boxing Hall of Fame who never won a world title (including years they fought).

JIMMY BIVINS (1940-55) – Beat the likes of Archie Moore but never received a title shot.

CHARLEY BURLEY (1936-50) – Some consider him the best boxer who never fought for a belt.

LES DARCY (1910-16) – Boxing wizard from Australia died at 21 after only one title shot.

BILLY GRAHAM (1941-55) – Lost to Kid Gavilan in his only two championship fights.

SAM LANGFORD (1902-26) – Had epic series with other great African-Americans.

LLOYD MARSHALL (1936-51) – Defeated Burley by a split decision in their only meeting.

BILLY MISKE (1913-23) – Lost to Jack Dempsey for the heavyweight crown and died at 29.

LASZLO PAPP (1957-64) – Three-time Olympic champion never lost as a pro.

YOUNG STRIBLING (1921-33) – Lost one title fight at both heavyweight and light heavyweight.

HOLMAN WILLIAMS (1932-48) – Great technician also never had a chance to fight for a title.

NOTE: Many African-American fighters, including several here, were not allowed to fight for titles because of their skin color.

RING POLL

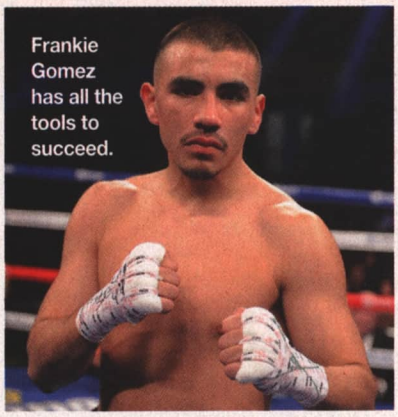
A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS.

Guillermo Rigondeaux looked all but untouchable in his one-sided victory over Nonito Donaire to establish himself as one of the best boxers in the world. Thus, we asked: Who can give new RING 122-pound champ Guillermo Rigondeaux a fight? Here are the results.

THE PERCENTAGES:

Mikey Garcia	43.3
Abner Mares	34.7
Chris John	12.9
Carl Frampton	4.1
Anselmo Moreno	3.4
Scott Quigg	0.9
Alexander Bakhtin	0.7

***Note:** 4,200 readers voted in the poll.*


Frankie Gomez has all the tools to succeed.

FRANKIE GOMEZ

By **Mike Coppinger**

THE ESSENTIALS

Age: 21
Weight class: Welterweight
Height: 5-foot-8
Stance: Orthodox
Nickname: Pitbull
Hometown: East Los Angeles, Calif.
Record: 15-0 (11 knockouts)

When Frankie Gomez learned he was being signed by Golden Boy Promotions in 2010, the then-18-year-old was thrilled.

After all, Oscar De La Hoya is Gomez's idol. Gomez eagerly points out that he was born the year De La Hoya won his Olympic gold medal (1992) and that they share the same birthday (Feb. 2). And both fighters hail from East Los Angeles.

De La Hoya and Co. also were excited for obvious reasons. Gomez was one of the top amateur prospects of the time. He won multiple amateur titles and reportedly had an amateur record of 120-8.

It seemed to be a perfect marriage. But two years later it was clear that Gomez wasn't living up to his vast potential.

He had gained a reputation for not training seriously, which was reflected in his performances. That and run-ins with the law early last year resulted in an 11-month layoff.

Was Gomez destined to become the next great bust in boxing?

Of course, that remains to be seen. But he seems to be headed in a positive direction.

He began training with Freddie Roach at the Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood, Calif., sparring with the likes of Manny Pacquiao. And Gomez is 3-0 since returning to the ring, including a one-sided decision over veteran spoiler Lanard Lane on his last birthday.

"I was young, but I'm maturing now," said Gomez, 21, who moved up to welterweight upon his return. "I'm more concentrated on boxing now. I don't go out as much anymore, and I'm more focused on what I have to do (in the ring)."

Gomez also had the support of his childhood hero.

"Train really hard; all the partying can wait," Gomez said, recounting the advice he received

from De La Hoya. "It's all going to be there two years from now, three years from now, the parties aren't going to go anywhere."

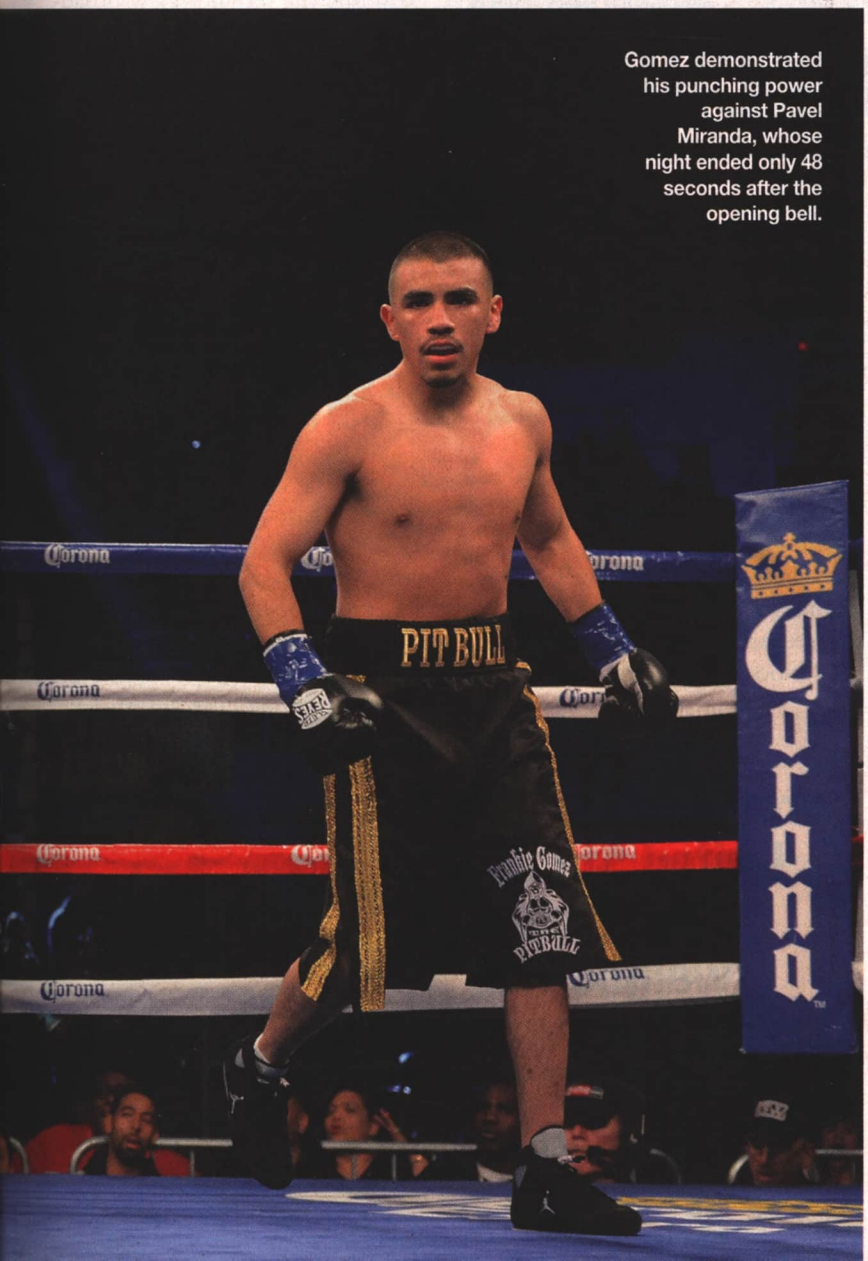
Gomez said his obvious potential makes him "train 10 times harder, so that he can be ready for what's to come." Roach likes what he sees.

"He has really fast hands, he's a big puncher and I think he's going to have a lot of success as a pro. He delivers a punch correctly and with good balance," Roach said. "He's definitely my best prospect at this point. He spars with all my top guys and does very, very well; him and Manny Pacquiao had wars every day.

"Big George (Foreman) came to visit me one day and Frankie wanted to spar with him and I said, 'Nah, he's just visiting.' He's very game, he wants to fight the best and that's what you have to do to be the best."

Gomez plans to keep up the pace in 2013 now that his "personal life is taken care of."

"I think it's possible (to fulfill my potential)," he said. "I just need to stay focused and train hard. ... Hopefully by the end of this year, beginning of next year, I'll be a regular on (the premium networks)." RING



Gomez demonstrated his punching power against Pavel Miranda, whose night ended only 48 seconds after the opening bell.

THREE MORE TO WATCH

ANDY RUIZ JR., HEAVYWEIGHT

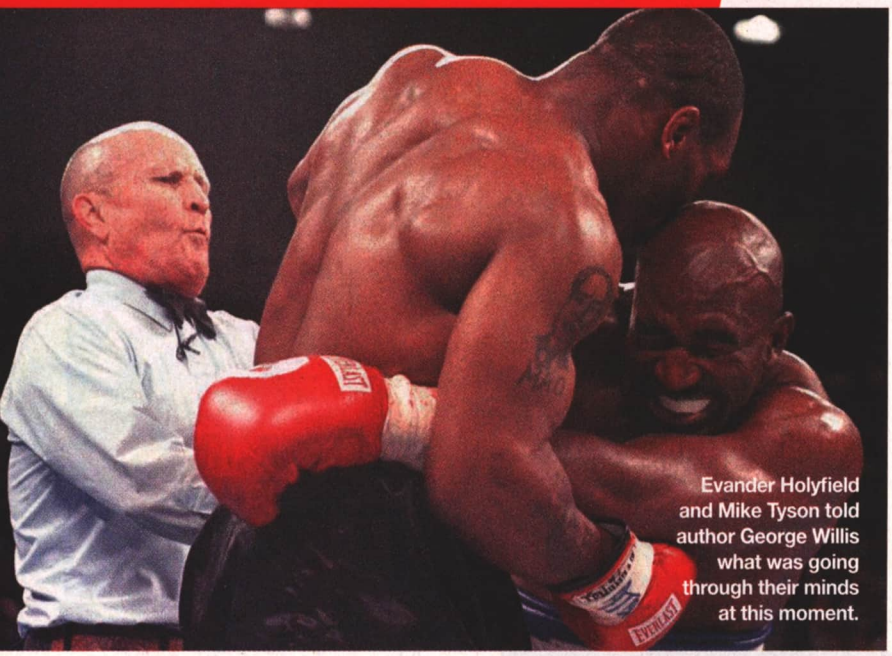
Ruiz (17-0, 11 KOs) was a two-time Mexican national amateur champion, compiling a 105-5 record in the unpaid ranks. He's well known for his battles with the scale – he weighed 297½ in his pro debut – but has gradually cut weight and came in at 256 in his last bout. He's short for a heavyweight at 6-2 but has fast hands for a big man. He is promoted by Top Rank.

JERMALL CHARLO, JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT

The twin brother of top prospect Jermell Charlo, Jermall, 22, is not as well known but may be the Charlo with the brightest future. Jermall (13-0, 9 KOs) is a big puncher and stepped up in competition with a stoppage win of Orlando Lora in April.

DARLEY PEREZ, LIGHTWEIGHT

Perez (28-0, 19 KOs) represented Colombia at the 2008 Olympic Games to cap a decorated amateur career. The 29-year-old will make his HBO debut on June 8 when he fights Yuriorkis Gamboa in Montreal. He is promoted by Gary Shaw Productions.



Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson told author George Willis what was going through their minds at this moment.

HEAVYWEIGHT CHOMP

New book provides a close look at Holyfield-Tyson II

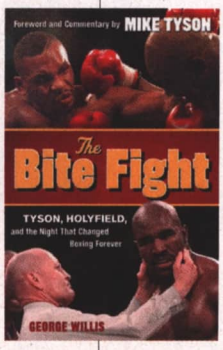
By **Kevin Canfield**

What went through Evander Holyfield's mind after Mike Tyson took a bite out of his right ear during their heavyweight title fight on June 28, 1997? According to George Willis' entertaining, astute and thoroughly reported new book, Holyfield momentarily considered returning the favor. "I said to myself don't do it halfway," he told Willis. "You do it all the way. If I bite him I'm going to bite his whole ear off." Holyfield kept his chompers in check, but 16 years later the deeply strange Tyson-Holyfield rematch remains an object of fascination.

In *The Bite Fight*, Willis, a *New York Post* columnist and boxing writer, talks to all the key players and explains the forces that shaped the combatants. He also seasons his narrative with little-known anecdotes, like the one about the post-fight chaos at the MGM Grand. "As much as $200,000 worth of chips and casino markers were stolen from tables and floors," Willis wrote. "Among those stuffing their pockets with chips was a future NBA Hall of Famer, who will go nameless since no charges were filed."

Holyfield had stopped Tyson in 11 rounds in the initial battle, on Nov. 9, 1996. In that fight, Willis wrote, "Tyson seemed enraged at seeing his own blood for the first time in his career" after he and Holyfield bumped heads. Referee Mitch Halpern ruled it accidental, but Tyson and his corner believed that Holyfield had butted him on purpose. Eight months later, in the second round of their rematch, Tyson felt that Holyfield was deliberately butting him again. In the third, Willis wrote, the action left Holyfield's "right ear next to Tyson's face. It was then Tyson turned, opened his mouth, and cranked down, looking like someone biting a tough piece of jerky." Moments later, he did it again, this time sinking his teeth into Holyfield's left ear.

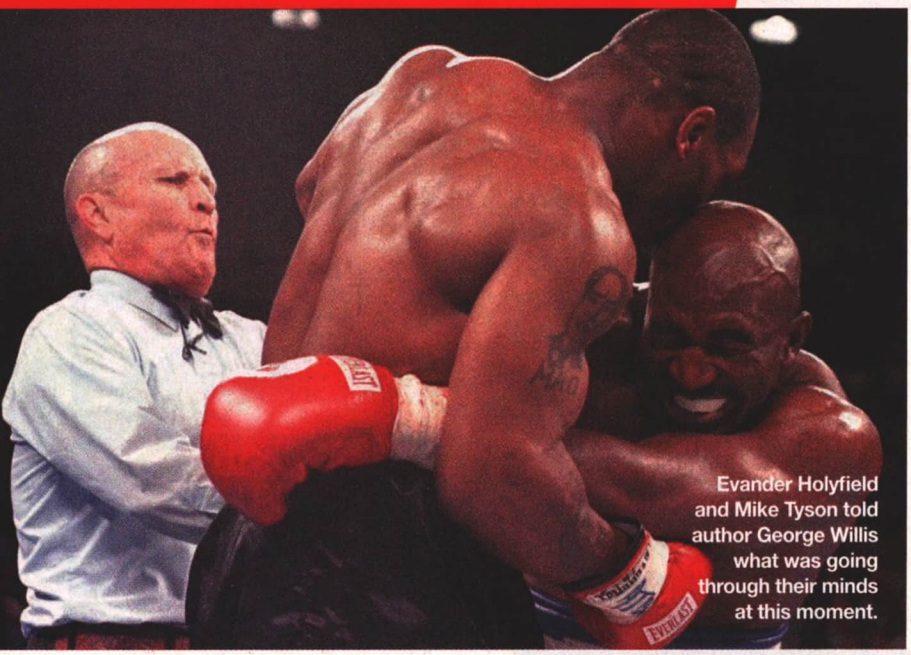
"Even the president of the United States, Bill Clinton, weighed in, saying he was 'horrified' by what Tyson did."



Calling the pay-per-view broadcast for Showtime, Steve Albert said what many of us home-viewers were thinking of Tyson: "He seems possessed right now." Tyson was disqualified, and the manner in which he lost quickly became a global news story, Willis wrote: "Even the president of the United States, Bill Clinton, weighed in, saying he was 'horrified' by what Tyson did."

The book includes recent interviews with both fighters, yet even now, Willis says, "there is no short answer for why Tyson" bit Holyfield. "He was head-butting me and I really lost it," Tyson told Willis. Holyfield, not surprisingly, has a different take: "People don't bite because they're mean. People bite because they're scared." But Tyson and Holyfield have put aside their differences. When Holyfield began selling his Real Deal BBQ Sauce, Tyson offered an endorsement via Twitter: "It's ear-licking good!" RING

***The Bite Fight: Tyson, Holyfield and the Night That Changed Boxing Forever*, by George Willis, Triumph Books, 240 pages, $24.95**



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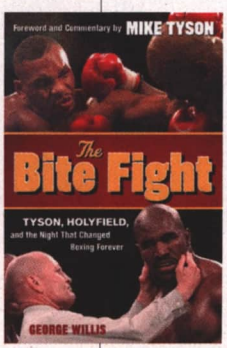

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CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH

BY HEATHER SHANHOLTZ

Brianna Martinez

Height: 5-foot-5
Weight: 110 pounds
Measurements: 32-25-34
Stance: Orthodox
Favorite Boxer: Pacman!
Hometown: Tucson, Ariz.
Current Location: Tucson
Where you've seen her: Ultimate MMA magazine, FIGHT magazine.
Booking Info: Briannamartinez1170@yahoo.com

Brianna Martinez

THE RING CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH BY: **HEATHER SHANHOLTZ**

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DO YOU WANT TO BE A RING CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH?

submit photos and bio to **ringcardgirl@sepublications.com**

Guillermo Rigondeaux (right) dazzled fans with his boxing skills in his unanimous-decision victory over Nonito Donaire but his cautious tactics turned off some.

BRILLIANT BUT BORING

Can Guillermo Rigondeaux attract fans with his cautious style?

By **David Greisman**

The best news to come out of Guillermo Rigondeaux's win over Nonito Donaire on April 13 is the realization that Rigondeaux should have no need to fight like that again.

It's not that he was completely Rigon-dull. There was beauty in the skill he used to disarm Donaire so effectively for so much of their 12-round bout. And there was drama in the suspense as we waited to see if Donaire could change the fight with his power, or if instead Rigondeaux would proceed to pick him apart.

Yet more time was spent waiting for them to punch than actually watching them throw. There is a difference between winning respect and winning fans. Rigondeaux now has a lot of one but just a little more of the other. While he won conclusively in his first

Naoki Fukuda

READY TO GRUMBLE

New RING champ Rigondeaux was on top of the world after his career-defining victory over Nonito Donaire.

HBO main event, he did not do so compellingly.

The last show that brought this much "nothing" to New York City was *Seinfeld*.

Rigondeaux threw just 33 punches per round, landing an average of about 11. He expended more effort in making Donaire miss than in making him pay. Meanwhile, Rigondeaux showed just enough of his sizzling speed and precise power to demonstrate to Donaire that he posed a threat, even though he did not often follow through on it.

It was brilliant, really. Rigondeaux defeated Donaire physically by defeating him mentally, though more with a Cold War approach than with many heated exchanges. It was an arms race: Rigondeaux showed early just how easily his arms could send his gloves cleanly into Donaire's face and just how difficult it would be for Donaire to have his hands land anywhere except far from their target.

Once Donaire found himself mired in this "Missing the Cuban Crisis," Rigondeaux could then send out shots with less fear of

Team Alvarado was ecstatic after Mike Alvarado turned his career around by outboxing Brandon Rios.

retaliation. He wasn't fearless, though. Even though he often made the Filipino Flash look flaccid, Rigondeaux remained careful, never overconfidently overextending himself with activity.

The lone time Rigondeaux let his guard down was in the 10th round, when Donaire forced his way out of a clinch and finally clocked Rigondeaux, sending him to the canvas. That would be Donaire's best round. Rigondeaux would soon follow with his own, hurting Donaire with a single left hand in the 12th, drawing swelling around Donaire's right eye as if to put an exclamation point on the lesson he had given throughout the evening: You can't hit what you can't see.

Rigondeaux fought the way he did because of the danger and because of yet another calculated decision from a man whose every action in the ring has a reason. He is conclusively the best boxer at 122 pounds and can be considered one of the top talents in the sport. For that alone, people will watch him again. He will need to give them other reasons, though.

No other junior featherweight was as good as Donaire, and Donaire is nowhere near as great as Rigondeaux. Rigondeaux made his point by outboxing Donaire. He can now be entertaining as he outclasses the rest.

★

Just as one punch can change a fight, one fight can change a career. In the span of one week, Timothy Bradley and Mike Alvarado both separated themselves from what had brought them into the spotlight — and in the process they revived their careers.

Bradley had never been a slick boxer, but he also had not been as recklessly aggressive as he was from the outset of what became a brutal battle with Ruslan Provodnikov. It was the wrong idea; as a welterweight in the Top Rank stable, he merely needed to win in order to set himself up for another significant payday later this year. That opportunity hung in the balance as the badly hurt Bradley continued to stand and trade with his chin exposed to further heavy hooks.

Bradley won a close, unanimous decision, and probably lost a lot of himself in the ring. But he will now be more popular than he had ever been before, even after his win last year over Manny Pacquiao, a controversial decision that led people to villainize him even though the true culprits were two judges.

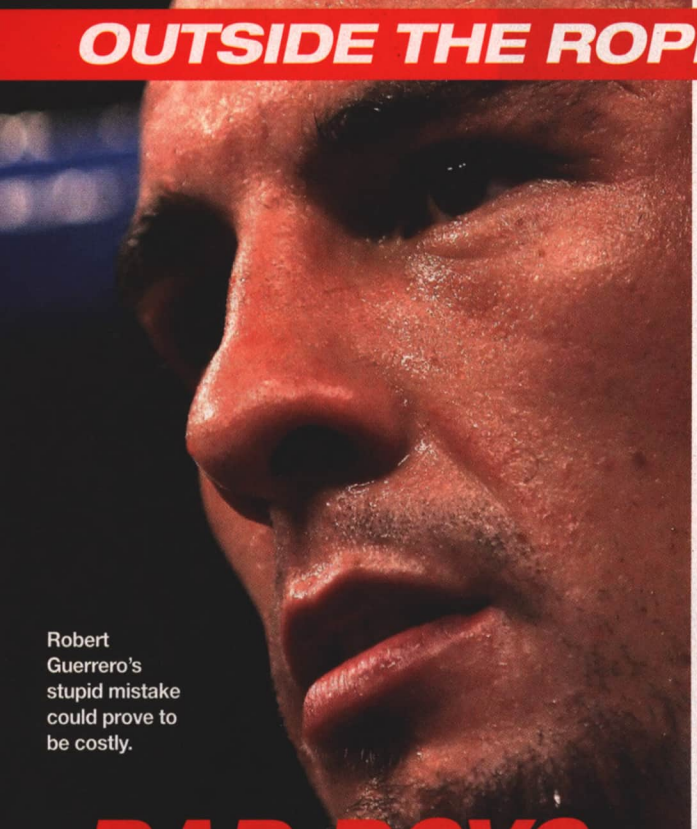
He was far from the first top boxer to have a surprisingly difficult time in what he thought was a keep-busy bout. Instead of this being a night that Bradley would rather forget, the fight will prove to be memorable — and the fighter has proven himself to be marketable.

Alvarado, meanwhile, was already a fan favorite for the way he had warred with Breidis Prescott, Mauricio Herrera and Brandon Rios. His rematch with Rios was not expected to be too different. The thought was that Alvarado would try to box in order to avoid being hurt and stopped again, but that Rios would break him down.

Brawling had made Alvarado an attraction. This time, it could have left him an afterthought. A second loss to Rios would mean rebuilding himself, and a second beating would lessen his ability to do that.

Alvarado still endured a fierce fight. As with warriors before him such as Arturo Gatti and Diego Corrales, he cannot help but fight with blood and guts. He also boxed with wisdom and patience.

Gatti's name is forever tied with that of Micky Ward. Corrales will always be thought of alongside Jose Luis Castillo. Mike Alvarado raised his stature in the sport because of his bouts with Brandon Rios. Now, though, he can go on to try to make a name for himself. RING



Robert Guerrero's stupid mistake could prove to be costly.

BAD BOYS

By **Brian Harty**

Robert Guerrero's appearance on *The 700 Club* and his stated belief that God was picking him to "humble" Floyd Mayweather Jr. on May 4 were in character. Guerrero has never tried hide his strong faith. While boarding a plane at New York's Kennedy Airport on March 28, Guerrero also chose not to hide the fact that he was traveling with a gun in his luggage. He was promptly arrested and charged with four felonies.

Queens District Attorney Richard Brown went for the low-hanging fruit, saying, "I hope that Mr. Guerrero fights better than he thinks."

But it's no joke. Although the .40-caliber handgun was locked in a box, unloaded and reportedly registered to Guerrero in California, New York requires that all guns in the state be liscensed there, and its record for prosecuting violators is second perhaps only to The Old Testament in terms of smiting. The Ghost could face as much as four years in jail. He was scheduled to appear in court on May 14, 10 days after whatever was or wasn't wrought in Las Vegas.

Not that Guerrero did all the stupid stuff in March. Fresh off his arrest for battery in Miami, **Adrien Broner** showed up in a video in which he was pulling hundred-dollar bills from a three-inch stack and flipping them onto the floor. And he was so annoyed to come across three twenties that he ripped up the offending notes and flushed them down a toilet. This was around the same time another video surfaced of Broner at a strip club, appearing to be orally "servicing" a dancer onstage. Classy guy.

Clifford Etienne, who learned to box in prison before going 29-4-2 as a heavyweight pro and then returning to prison in 2006 for armed robbery, attempted murder, carjacking and kidnapping, had 55 years removed from his sentence on a technicality in April. That brought it down to 105 years.

And it turns out that **Tamerlan Tsarnaev**, the 26-year-old Boston bombing suspect who died after a gunfight with police, was also a boxer. Great. Tsarnaev was the New England Golden Gloves heavyweight champion in 2009 and 2010, and once served as a sparring partner for super middleweight contender Edwin Rodriguez.

Former undisputed heavyweight champ **Riddick Bowe**, now 45 years old, announced that he would make his Muay Thai debut against Russian Levgen Golovin on May 16 in Thailand.

Two-time welterweight titleholder **Andre Berto** revealed that he, too, has a yearning to kick people. He said he has spoken to UFC President Dana White about a possible appearance in the Octagon.

London's **Michael Norgrove**, 31, appeared to be winning his sixth professional bout on March 28 when the ref stopped it due to the junior middleweight prospect's unusual behavior. Norgrove then collapsed and was taken to the hospital, where he died nine days later due to complications from a blood clot in his brain.

Carl "The Truth" Williams died on April 7. The former heavyweight contender was best known for a narrow 15-round loss to Larry Holmes in 1985 and a one-round defeat at the hands of Mike Tyson in 1989. Williams always insisted that the latter was stopped too soon.

Finally, a hostage situation on April 9 ended with the deaths of two people and a fire that destroyed a medical office building in Detroit. Dr. Stuart Kirschenbaum, a podiatrist, lost more than four decades' worth of patient records in the blaze, as well as a trove of boxing memorabilia that included what he called "perhaps the best **Joe Louis** collection in the world." Kirschenbaum, a former boxing commissioner, had served as a guardian to Louis' widow, Martha, in the last three years of her life. He had intended for the "gloves, clothing, letters, photos and other artifacts" to be housed in a future Michigan Boxing Hall of Fame.

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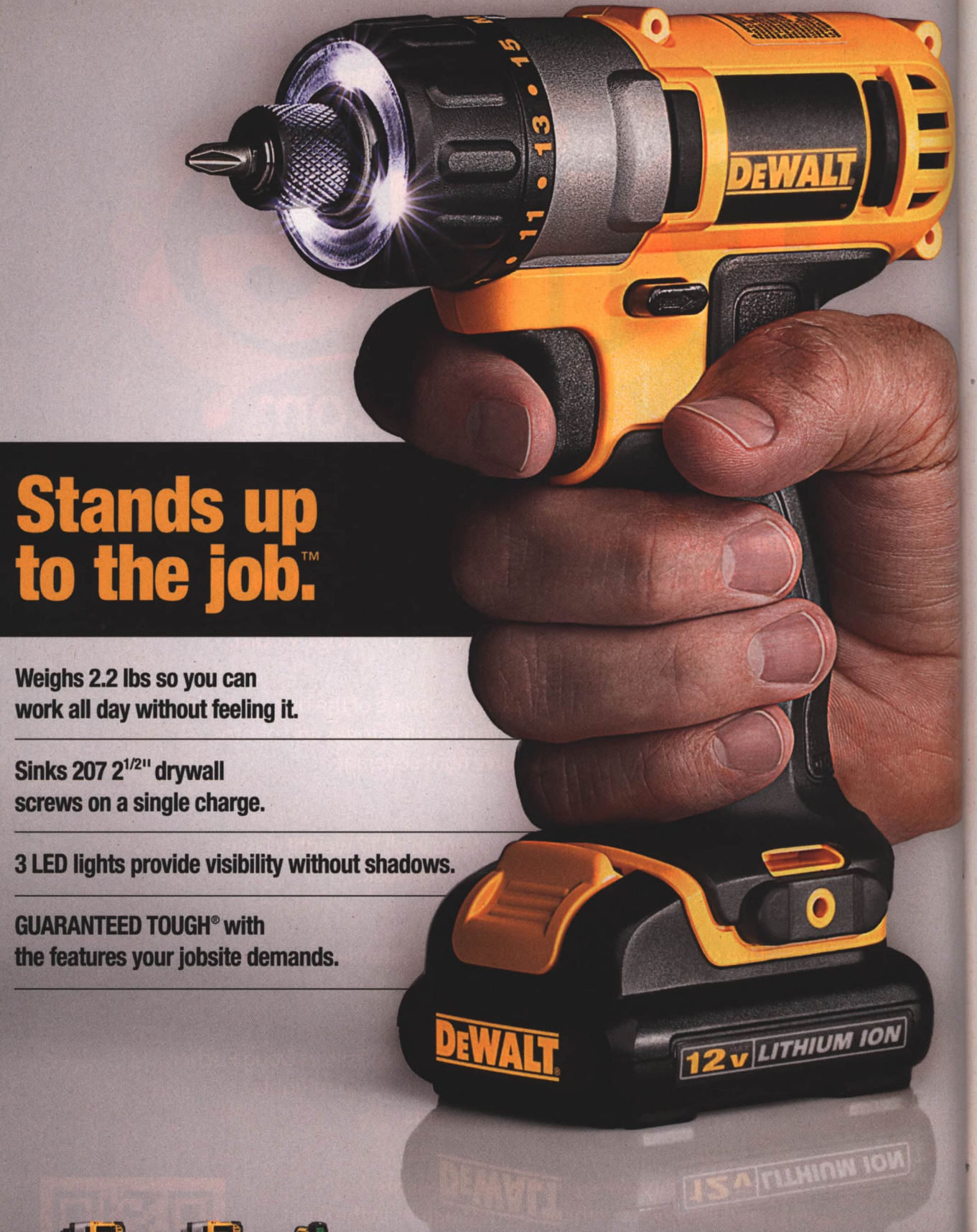

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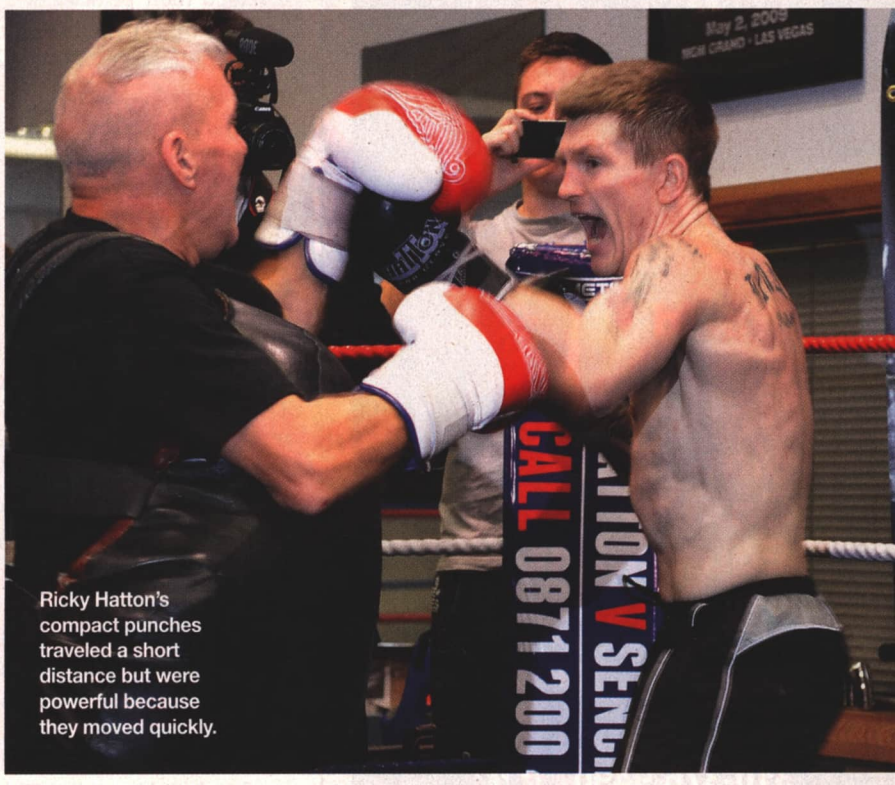
FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY, PUNCH LIKE A SHRIMP

By **Scott LaFee**



Ricky Hatton's compact punches traveled a short distance but were powerful because they moved quickly.

ANDREW YATES/AFP/Getty Images

In boxing, speed and power are everything. Boxers who throw blows faster and harder than their pummeled opponents tend to win more often than they lose. That's obvious even to the concussion-addled.

So boxers of all stripes, amateur or pro, spend a lot of time working to improve the speed of their fists and the pack in their punch. These things go hand-in-glove.

The physics of punching is fairly straightforward. When a boxer is coiled to strike, the energy contained in his drawn-back arm and fist is described as "potential." Any good boxer has lots of potential energy. What matters is what happens next, when the boxer begins to throw a punch and that potential energy becomes "kinetic."

Physicists measure speed with a simple calculation: Velocity equals distance over time.

There are two fundamental ways to make a thrown fist move faster: Lengthen the distance it covers (which allows for increasing velocity) or, given the same distance, shorten the time between start and finish.

Distance is explicitly limited by the maximum length of a fighter's arm. The longer the limb, the faster a punch can move – at least in theory. Timing is more a matter of talent, training and luck. Some boxers naturally accelerate their arms faster than others, or they learn how to.

What's the advantage of punching faster? Well, for one thing, it likely means a fighter can throw more of them in a finite period of time. But more important, a faster punch delivers more hurt.

Again, the explanation is basic physics. A fist in motion carries momentum, which in scientific terms means it has a tendency to resist change in acceleration until, naturally, it collides with, say, an opponent's jaw.

At that point, the concept of impulse applies, which means there's been a change in momentum. Kinetic energy is transferred from the moving fist to the receiving jaw. The fist slows down, the jaw (and rest of the head) speeds up, absorbing some of that momentum to begin moving in the same general direction as the traveling fist.

The mass of a fist is constant, but momentum is not: The faster a fist moves, the greater its momentum and the bigger the exchange of energy when it hits something.

In the movie *Rocky IV*, Ivan Drago – the best boxer Russian science could build – supposedly throws a punch that registers

SWEET SCIENCE

2,150 pounds per square inch in force, or more than twice the measured bite pressure of lions, tigers and hyenas.

It's fiction. No actual human can hit anywhere near that hard, at least not according to real-world research. For example, a 2005 study of seven Olympic boxers in varying weight classes revealed their peak punch force ranged between 447 to 1,066 psi. The bigger the boxer, the greater the punching power.

In another study of 70 boxers, it was estimated the elite fighters averaged 776 psi.

And in 1985, the same year *Rocky IV* debuted, tests involving boxer Frank Bruno found the English heavyweight could throw a punch with a maximum force of 920 psi, which researchers extrapolated to a real-life blow of 1,420 pounds.

That's enough force to accelerate a receiving opponent's head to 53 g's – 53 times the force of gravity. Most lethal auto accidents, by comparison, involve colliding forces between 30 and 60 g's.

(Bruno's punching power served him well, albeit not very long. The British boxer won 40 of 45 fights in his career, becoming World Boxing Council heavyweight champ in 1995 when he outpointed Oliver McCall over 12 rounds. But six months later, Bruno stepped into the ring a second time with Mike Tyson, who stopped him in the third round. It was Bruno's last professional fight.)

More recently – in 2007 – researchers at the University of Manchester in England attempted to measure the punch force of boxer Ricky Hatton who, at the time, was an undefeated 28-year-old junior welterweight titleholder with the scary nickname of "Hitman."

The scientists had Hatton smack a 70-pound punching bag outfitted with sensors. The Hitman generated roughly 800 pounds of force. By comparison, the average person with no boxing skills or training, according to the researchers, can generate about 80 punching pounds of force.

Slow motion video of Hatton's punches showed that he could typically generate fist speeds of 25 miles per hour, with a maximum of 32 mph. When the researchers tried, their best speed was a laggardly 15 mph.

Still, Hatton is no match for the recognized speed-punching champion of the animal world: the mantis shrimp, a cousin of crabs and lobsters that hurls its hinged front appendages at unsuspecting passing prey.

A few years back, University of California, Berkeley researcher Sheila Patek and colleagues clocked the attacking arms of the peacock mantis shrimp (Odontodactylus scyllarus) at speeds approaching 50 mph, accelerating at up to 10,000 g's.

Not surprisingly, these shrimp pack a wallop: One specimen under study (aptly named Tyson) reportedly struck the side of his laboratory aquarium, breaking the quarter-inch-thick glass.

Mantis shrimp may be just a few inches long and weigh only grams, but when it comes to punching speed and power, they're in a class by themselves.

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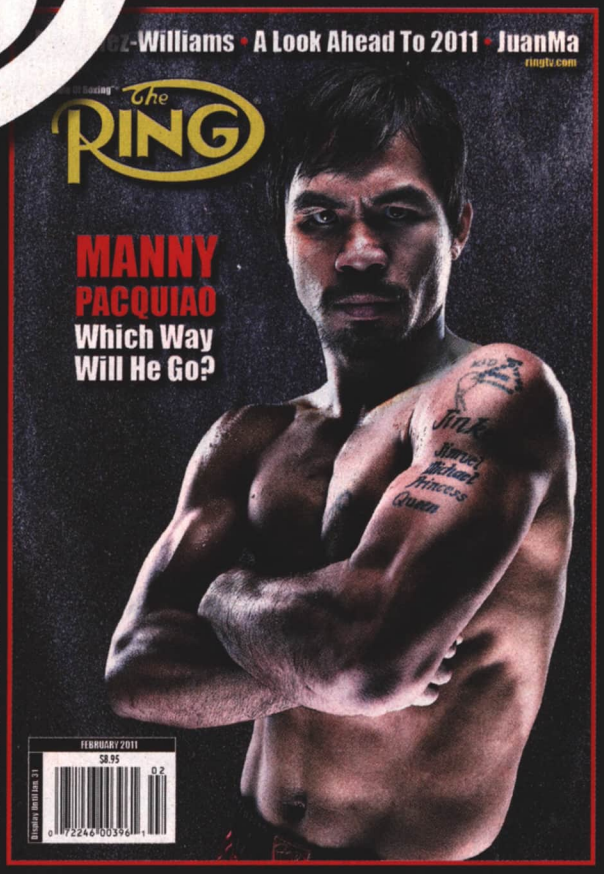

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ANOTHER MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Holly Holm's retirement apparently spoils any chance of a superfight with Cecilia Braekhus

By **Thomas Gerbasi**

The decision of Holly Holm (right, fighting Anne Sophie Mathis) to focus on MMA appears to have quashed hopes of a showdown with Cecilia Braekhus.

They're the two best boxers in the world. They fight at about the same weight. And even though fight fans have been clamoring for them to meet one another in the ring, something has always stood in the way.

Sound familiar?

This isn't about Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao, though, as the men don't have a monopoly on intriguing superfights that may never materialize. Holly Holm and Cecilia Braekhus had their own potential dream fight, one that would've determined the best female fighter in the game today.

And then, on April 16, any hope of a Holm vs. Braekhus showdown seemed to slip away. Holm announced that day her retirement from boxing – effective after her fight against Mary McGee on May 11 – to pursue a career in mixed martial arts.

"My passion is just really in MMA, and I want to make a go at it," said Holm, already 3-0 in MMA.

The shocking news spread quickly, not just throwing Holm vs. Braekhus into the scrap bin with other superfights such as Laila Ali vs. Ann Wolfe and Christy Martin vs. Lucia Rijker, but igniting a firestorm on social media. Holm, a three-division world champ, took plenty of abuse on Twitter for choosing to walk away from the sport without fighting Braekhus, the current WBA, WBC and WBO welterweight titleholder.

Braekhus, fresh off a third-round knockout of Mia St. John on April 13, didn't shy away from throwing wood on the fire.

"I am very, very disappointed," said Braekhus. "A fight against Holly would have been the biggest thing in women's boxing, the one fight every fan wants to see. It's a shame that it will not happen.

Braekhus' reaction to Holm's announcement? "I'm very, very disappointed."

But it's not our fault. We've done all we could. When she has the chance to give the fans what they want to see, she retires."

Even as late as the day of Holm's retirement press conference in her hometown of Albuquerque, N.M., Braekhus' reps from Sauerland Event made an offer to Holm's promoter, Lenny Fresquez. But it was too little too late.

"We were negotiating to fight in January, and we didn't hear from them," said the New Mexico-based promoter. "Then on Jan. 24 we hear they're fighting Mia St. John, and that was kind of the straw that broke her (Holm's) back because after Cecilia there was no one else to fight. On their side there was still hope, but I had told Nisse (Sauerland) in January that when they signed that Mia fight, this fight was probably not gonna happen now. He thought I was just negotiating."

Sauerland, who has been in boxing since birth as the son of Hall of Famer Wilfried Sauerland, was stunned by the news of Holm's retirement.

"I'm a big boxing fan, and I also work in boxing, and I had a chance to make a great fight," he said. "Too often these days big fights don't get made. Pacquiao-Mayweather, when it should have been made wasn't made. It's a shame that this fight has gone the same way. We tried everything. We put in a six-figure offer to them, and we've jumped through all the hoops with them. So what can you do?"

The last proposal from Team Braekhus was for a fight in Copenhagen, Braekhus' hometown, but Sauerland admits that he was also amenable to a two-fight deal with bouts in Europe and the United States. Yet it's clear that when it came down to it, Holm made the final call. Her heart evidently was not in the sport anymore.

"I am a fighter, and I'm not scared of her," said Holm, 31. "And I think people know that, and they want to push me and see if they can make it happen. But I told myself from the beginning: I will never take a fight for money or for fame. I would only take a fight for passion and what's in my heart. And I've always stuck to that. So as much as my ego wants to say, 'Fine, I'll just go fight her,' my heart is somewhere else, and I'm listening to it." RING

POUND FOR POUND

1. HOLLY HOLM, U.S.
32-2-3 (9 KOs)
Junior welterweight

2. CECILIA BRAEKHUS, Norway
21-0 (5 KOs)
Welterweight

3. MELISSA HERNANDEZ, U.S.
18-3-3 (6 KOs)
Featherweight

4. AVA KNIGHT, U.S.
11-1-3 (5 KOs)
Flyweight

5. ANNE SOPHIE MATHIS, France
26-3 (22 KOs)
Welterweight

6. MARIANA JUAREZ, Mexico
36-6-3 (16 KOs)
Junior bantamweight

7. LAYLA MCCARTER, U.S.
35-13-5 (8 KOs)
Junior middleweight

8. YESICA YOLANDA BOPP, Argentina
24-0 (11 KOs),
Flyweight

9. FRIDA WALLBERG, Sweden
11-0 (2 KOs)
Junior lightweight

10. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS, Argentina
16-0 (9 KOs)
Lightweight

Note: Holm will be removed from the list after her May 11 fight because of her retirement.

Guillermo Rigondeaux (right) was in complete control of his fight against Nonito Donaire from beginning to end.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH:

GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Say what you want about the tactics of Guillermo Rigondeaux in his unanimous-decision victory over RING junior featherweight champ Nonito Donaire on April 13 in New York City. Too defensive? Overly cautious? Downright boring?

Doesn't matter. The fact is he utterly dominated an opponent who was rated No. 5 on THE RING's pound-for-pound list going into the fight.

That's why Rigondeaux was a fairly easy choice for Fighter of the Month over Saul "Canelo" Alvarez, who claimed an important victory but wasn't as dominating against a less-proven foe in Austin Trout on April 20.

Everyone recognized Rigondeaux's ability going into the fight. The Cuban was one of the best amateur boxers in history, having won two Olympic gold medals. However, he was only 11-0 going into the Donaire fight; he had yet to prove whether he could be a dominating pro.

And then he did, outclassing Donaire (31-2, 20 knockouts) with remarkable defensive skills and blazing-quick, accurate punches to win 114-113, 115-112 and 116-111 and capture the RING championship. Ignore the close scores. It was a wipeout.

The performance might not have thrilled those who crave action – Rigondeaux (12-0, 8 KOs) isn't that type of fighter – but it was stunning in its thoroughness. In one remarkable fight he left no doubt that he is one of the best boxers in the world. RING

POUND FOR POUND: Nonito Donaire fell from the No. 5 spot all the way to No. 10 after his unanimous-decision loss to Guillermo Rigondeaux. That lifted everyone from No. 6 to No. 10 up a notch.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Ruslan Chagaev (No. 7 last month) and Robert Helenius (No. 6 last month) swapped places after the former stopped unrated Mike Sheppard in one round while the latter outpointed Michael Sprott (also unrated). Tyson Fury (No. 9 last month) got up from the canvas to stop former cruiserweight titleholder Steve Cunningham (unrated) in seven rounds and rose to No. 8 as a result.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Tony Bellew (No. 10 last month) moved up to No. 8 after drawing with No. 7 Isaac Chilemba in England. Chilemba maintained his position. Meanwhile, No. 9-rated Gabriel Campillo was dropped from the list to make room at the bottom for Denis Grachev, who outpointed previously undefeated Zsolt Erdei in Monte Carlo.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Robert Stieglitz (No. 6 last month) notched his best win yet over ratings mainstay Arthur Abraham (No. 5 at the time), a fourth-round TKO. Stieglitz displaced Thomas Oosthuizen at No. 4 while Abraham fell to No. 6.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: James Kirkland (No. 8 last month) was dropped due to inactivity, lifting No. 9 Zaurbek Baysangurov and No. 10 Ishe Smith up one position each and creating a vacancy for undefeated Demetrius Andrade to fill at No. 10. Saul "Canelo" Alvarez (No. 2 last month) showed some surprising boxing skills on the way to a close unanimous decision over Austin Trout (No. 3 at the time). Alvarez claimed the vacant RING championship, Trout rose to No. 2 and everyone below him gained a rank, with Ohio son Willie Nelson taking the No. 10 spot.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Mike Alvarado gained redemption in another brilliant clash with Brandon Rios, scoring a unanimous-decision win over the brawler from Kansas. Alvarado climbed from No. 8 to claim the No. 6 spot from Rios, who fell to No. 7 and pushed undefeated Russian Khabib Allakhverdiev down one notch.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Unrated Takashi Miura stopped Gamaliel Diaz in nine rounds to take the WBC title and No. 8 rating. Diaz fell off the list. Everyone from Evgeny Gradovich (No. 7 last month) to Javier Fortuna (No. 10 last month) moved up a space, and erstwhile Puerto Rican Juan Manuel Lopez reclaimed a spot at No. 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No. 6-rated Daud Yordan was dropped from the list after losing by 12th-round stoppage to unrated South African Simpiwe Vetyeka. Celestino Caballero (No. 5 last month) ended a 16-month layoff with a loss to unrated Mexican Robinson Castellanos. Caballero was dropped from the list, Castellanos claimed the bottom spot and everyone in between climbed one notch.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Guillermo Rigondeaux (No. 1 last month) gave Nonito Donaire a boxing lesson at Radio City Music Hall to take the Filipino Flash's RING championship and the WBO belt, as well as retain his own WBA title. Victor Terrazas replaced Jonathan Romero at No. 10 after defeating the accomplished Cristian Mijares by a split decision in Mexico City.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Joseph Agbeko, fighting for the first time since he lost to Abner Mares in 2011, convincingly outpointed Luis Melendez and returned to the ratings at No. 10 (replacing Jamie McDonnell).

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Rodel Mayol (No. 9 last month) was removed from the ratings, elevating Oleydong Sithsamerchai one notch and making room at No. 10 for Arthur Villanueva, who won a wide decision over previously undefeated Marco Demecillo in the Philippines.

FLYWEIGHTS: Akira Yaegashi rose from a mid-level rating at strawweight to claim the RING flyweight championship from Toshiyuki Igarashi via a unanimous decision in Tokyo. In Macau, No. 1-rated Brian Viloria lost a split decision to Juan Estrada (No. 2 last month), who earned the No. 1 spot in addition to the WBA and WBO titles. Viloria fell to No. 2, Igarashi dropped to No. 5 and everyone else on the list was pushed down a notch.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Pedro Guevara won a split decision over former strawweight titleholder Raul Garcia to crack the ratings at No. 10. No. 9 Alberto Rossel was dropped and No. 10 Felix Alvarado rose a notch in the process.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Unrated Katsunari Takayama wrested the IBF title from Mario Rodriguez (No. 3 last month) and arrived in the ratings at No. 4. South African Nkosinathi Joyi rose to No. 3 while Rodriguez dropped to No. 5, with everyone below losing a spot and No. 10 Merlito Sabillo being pushed from the list. With Yaegashi vacating his no. 6 spot to assume the throne at 112 pounds, those below moved up one notch each and Sabillo returned at No. 10.

Saul "Canelo" Alvarez (right) mixed in a little power punching with his newfound boxing tactics.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 59-3-0 (50 KOs)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 45-2-0 (41 KOs)
2. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia | 25-0-0 (17 KOs)
3. **DAVID HAYE**
U.K. | 26-2-0 (24 KOs)
4. **KUBRAT PULEV**
Bulgaria | 17-0-0 (9 KOs)
5. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland | 48-2-0 (29 KOs)
6. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan | 31-2-1 (20 KOs)
7. **ROBERT HELENIUS**
Finland | 19-0-0 (11 KOs)
8. **TYSON FURY**
U.K. | 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
9. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia | 32-0-0 (25 KOs)
10. **TONY THOMPSON**
U.S. | 37-3-0 (25 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C **YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ**
Cuba | 27-1-0 (13 KOs)

1. **MARCO HUCK**
Germany | 35-2-1 (25 KOs)
2. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland | 47-2-1 (33 KOs)
3. **OLA AFOLABI**
U.K. | 19-2-4 (9 KOs)
4. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia | 25-1-0 (19 KOs)
5. **LATEEF KAYODE**
Nigeria | 18-0-0 (14 KOs)
6. **MATEUSZ MASTERNAK**
Poland | 30-0-0 (22 KOs)
7. **TROY ROSS**
Canada | 25-3-0 (16 KOs)
8. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
Germany | 32-6-2 (21 KOs)
9. **DMYTRO KUCHER**
Ukraine | 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
10. **RAKHIM CHAKHKIEV**
Russia | 16-0-0 (12 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C **CHAD DAWSON**
U.S. | 31-2-0 (17 KOs)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
U.S. | 52-6-2 (32 KOs)
2. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
U.K. | 25-0-0 (12 KOs)
3. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kazakhstan | 13-1-0 (8 KOs)
4. **SERGEI KOVALEV**
Russia | 20-0-1 (18 KOs)
5. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
U.S. | 24-1-0 (19 KOs)
6. **KARO MURAT**
Germany | 25-1-1 (15 KOs)
7. **ISAAC CHILEMBA**
Malawi | 20-1-2 (9 KOs)
8. **TONY BELLEW**
U.K. | 19-1-1 (12 KOs)
9. **JUERGEN BRAEHMER**
Germany | 39-2-0 (30 KOs)
10. **DENIS GRACHEV**
Russia | 13-1-1 (8 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C **ANDRE WARD**
U.S. | 26-0-0 (14 KOs)

1. **CARL FROCH**
U.K. | 30-2-0 (22 KOs)
2. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark | 46-2-0 (35 KOs)
3. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania | 31-1-0 (24 KOs)
4. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Russia | 44-3-0 (25 KOs)
5. **THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**
South Africa | 21-0-1 (13 KOs)
6. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia | 36-4-0 (28 KOs)
7. **GEORGE GROVES**
U.K. | 18-0-0 (14 KOs)
8. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon | 31-5-2 (21 KOs)
9. **ADONIS STEVENSON**
Canada | 20-1-0 (17 KOs)
10. **EDWIN RODRIGUEZ**
Dominican Rep. | 23-0-0 (15 KOs)

RATINGS

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

- **C SERGIO MARTINEZ**
  Argentina | 50-2-2 (28 KOs)
- **1. DANIEL GEALE**
  Australia | 29-1-0 (15 KOs)
- **2. GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
  Kazakhstan | 26-0-0 (23 KOs)
- **3. JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.**
  Mexico | 46-1-1 (32 KOs)
- **4. DMITRY PIROG**
  Russia | 20-0-0 (15 KOs)
- **5. MATTHEW MACKLIN**
  U.K. | 29-4-0 (20 KOs)
- **6. PETER QUILLIN**
  U.S. | 28-0-0 (20 KOs)
- **7. MARTIN MURRAY**
  U.K. | 25-0-1 (11 KOs)
- **8. FELIX STURM**
  Germany | 37-4-2 (16 KOs)
- **9. HASSAN N'DAM**
  France | 27-1-0 (17 KOs)
- **10. SAM SOLIMAN**
  Australia | 43-11-0 (17 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

- **C SAUL ALVAREZ**
  Mexico | 42-0-1 (30 KOs)
- **1. FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
  U.S. | 43-0-0 (26 KOs)
- **2. AUSTIN TROUT**
  U.S. | 26-1-0 (14 KOs)
- **3. MIGUEL COTTO**
  Puerto Rico | 37-4-0 (30 KOs)
- **4. ERISLANDY LARA**
  Cuba | 17-1-2 (11 KOs)
- **5. VANES MARTIROSYAN**
  U.S. | 32-0-1 (20 KOs)
- **6. CARLOS MOLINA**
  Mexico | 21-5-2 (6 KOs)
- **7. ZAURBEK BAYSANGUROV**
  Russia | 28-1-0 (20 KOs)
- **8. ISHE SMITH**
  U.S. | 25-5-0 (11 KOs)
- **9. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE**
  U.S. | 19-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **10. WILLIE NELSON**
  U.S. | 20-1-1 (12 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

- **C VACANT**
- **1. FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
  U.S. | 43-0-0 (26 KOs)
- **2. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
  Mexico | 55-6-1 (40 KOs)
- **3. ROBERT GUERRERO**
  U.S. | 31-1-1 (18 KOs)
- **4. MANNY PACQUIAO**
  Philippines | 54-5-2 (38 KOs)
- **5. KELL BROOK**
  U.K. | 29-0-0 (19 KOs)
- **6. PAULIE MALIGNAGGI**
  U.S. | 32-4-0 (7 KOs)
- **7. TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
  U.S. | 30-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **8. VICTOR ORTIZ**
  U.S. | 29-4-2 (22 KOs)
- **9. DEVON ALEXANDER**
  U.S. | 24-1-0 (13 KOs)
- **10. KEITH THURMAN**
  U.S. | 20-0-0 (18 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

- **C DANNY GARCIA**
  U.S. | 25-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **1. LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
  Argentina | 33-2-0 (31 KOs)
- **2. AMIR KHAN**
  U.K. | 27-3-0 (19 KOs)
- **3. LAMONT PETERSON**
  U.S. | 31-1-1 (16 KOs)
- **4. ZAB JUDAH**
  U.S. | 42-7-0 (29 KOs)
- **5. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
  Mexico | 55-6-1 (40 KOs)
- **6. MIKE ALVARADO**
  U.S. | 34-1-0 (23 KOs)
- **7. BRANDON RIOS**
  U.S. | 31-1-1 (23 KOs)
- **8. KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV**
  Russia | 18-0-0 (8 KOs)
- **9. DENIS SHAFIKOV**
  Russia | 32-0-1 (17 KOs)
- **10. RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV**
  Russia | 22-2-0 (15 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

- **C VACANT**
- **1. ADRIEN BRONER**
  U.S. | 26-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **2. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
  Mexico | 33-3-0 (13 KOs)
- **3. RICKY BURNS**
  U.K. | 35-2-0 (10 KOs)
- **4. RICHARD ABRIL**
  Cuba | 18-3-1 (8 KOs)
- **5. ANTONIO DEMARCO**
  Mexico | 28-3-1 (21 KOs)
- **6. GAVIN REES**
  U.K. | 37-2-1 (18 KOs)
- **7. SHARIF BOGERE**
  Uganda | 23-1-0 (15 KOs)
- **8. KEVIN MITCHELL**
  U.K. | 33-2-0 (24 KOs)
- **9. RAYMUNDO BELTRAN**
  Mexico | 27-6-0 (17 KOs)
- **10. DANIEL ESTRADA**
  Mexico | 31-2-1 (23 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

- **C VACANT**
- **1. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
  Japan | 19-0-1 (16 KOs)
- **2. YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
  Cuba | 22-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **3. ARGENIS MENDEZ**
  Dominican Rep. | 21-2-0 (11 KOs)
- **4. ROMAN MARTINEZ**
  Puerto Rico | 27-1-2 (16 KOs)
- **5. JUAN CARLOS BURGOS**
  Mexico | 30-1-0 (20 KOs)
- **6. DIEGO MAGDALENO**
  U.S. | 23-1-0 (9 KOs)
- **7. JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
  Mexico | 26-1-1 (16 KOs)
- **8. TAKASHI MIURA**
  Japan | 25-2-2 (19 KOs)
- **9. TAKAHIRO AO**
  Japan | 23-3-1 (10 KOs)
- **10. SERGIO THOMPSON**
  Mexico | 26-2-0 (24 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

- **C MIKEY GARCIA**
  U.S. | 31-0-0 (26 KOs)
- **1. CHRIS JOHN**
  Indonesia | 48-0-3 (22 KOs)
- **2. DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
  Mexico | 44-4-0 (35 KOs)
- **3. ORLANDO SALIDO**
  Mexico | 39-12-2 (27 KOs)
- **4. JHONNY GONZALEZ**
  Mexico | 53-8-0 (45 KOs)
- **5. EVGENY GRADOVICH**
  Russia | 16-0-0 (8 KOs)
- **6. BILLY DIB**
  Australia | 35-2-0 (21 KOs)
- **7. NICHOLAS WALTERS**
  Jamaica | 22-0-0 (18 KOs)
- **8. JAVIER FORTUNA**
  Dominican Rep. | 22-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **9. JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
  Puerto Rico | 33-2-0 (30 KOs)
- **10. ROBINSON CASTELLANOS**
  Mexico | 18-9-0 (11 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

- **C GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
  Cuba | 12-0-0 (8 KOs)
- **1. NONITO DONAIRE**
  Philippines | 31-2-0 (20 KOs)
- **2. ABNER MARES**
  U.S. | 25-0-1 (13 KOs)
- **3. JEFFREY MATHEBULA**
  South Africa | 27-4-2 (14 KOs)
- **4. ALEXANDER BAKHTIN**
  Russia | 31-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **5. CARL FRAMPTON**
  U.K. | 16-0-0 (10 KOs)
- **6. SCOTT QUIGG**
  U.K. | 25-0-1 (18 KOs)
- **7. VIC DARCHINYAN**
  Armenia | 38-5-1 (27 KOs)
- **8. HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
  Japan | 31-4-0 (13 KOs)
- **9. TOMOKI KAMEDA**
  Japan | 27-0-0 (18 KOs)
- **10. VICTOR TERRAZAS**
  Mexico | 37-2-1 (21 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another; 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders chose not to fight one another and either of them fights No. 3, No. 4 or No. 5, the winner may be awarded THE RING belt if the Editorial Board deems the contenders worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Ratings Chairman Chuck Giampa considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world but has final say on all changes. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C VACANT

1. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama | 33-2-1 (12 KOs)
2. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
   Japan | 18-0-2 (13 KOs)
3. **LEO SANTA CRUZ**
   U.S. | 23-0-1 (13 KOs)
4. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan | 30-1-0 (17 KOs)
5. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines | 32-3-3 (20 KOs)
6. **HUGO RUIZ**
   Mexico | 31-2-0 (28 KOs)
7. **PAULUS AMBUNDA**
   Namibia | 20-0-0 (10 KOs)
8. **JULIO CEJA**
   Mexico | 24-0-0 (22 KOs)
9. **RYOSUKE IWASA**
   Japan | 14-1-0 (9 KOs)
10. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
    Ghana | 29-4-0 (22 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C VACANT

1. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina | 38-1-2 (20 KOs)
2. **YOTA SATO**
   Japan | 26-2-1 (12 KOs)
3. **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**
   Thailand | 25-5-1 (10 KOs)
4. **JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ JR.**
   Mexico | 15-1-1 (8 KOs)
5. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
   Mexico | 28-0-0 (23 KOs)
6. **KOHEI KONO**
   Japan | 28-7-0 (11 KOs)
7. **TEPPARITH SINGWANCHA**
   Thailand | 22-3-0 (13 KOs)
8. **RYO AKAHO**
   Japan | 19-1-2 (12 KOs)
9. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
   Thailand | 47-1-1 (17 KOs)
10. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
    Philippines | 21-0-0 (11 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C AKIRA YAEGASHI
Japan | 17-3-0 (9 KOs)

1. **JUAN ESTRADA**
   Mexico | 23-2-0 (18 KOs)
2. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   U.S. | 32-4-0 (19 KOs)
3. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
   Mexico | 35-3-0 (26 KOs)
4. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   S. Africa | 29-2-0 (20 KOs)
5. **TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI**
   Japan | 17-2-1 (10 KOs)
6. **MILAN MELINDO**
   Philippines | 29-0-0 (12 KOs)
7. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina | 30-1-0 (16 KOs)
8. **EDGAR SOSA**
   Mexico | 48-7-0 (29 KOs)
9. **ROCKY FUENTES**
   Philippines | 35-6-2 (20 KOs)
10. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
    Panama | 28-3-0 (21 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C VACANT

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
   Nicaragua | 34-0-0 (28 KOs)
2. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines | 31-1-3 (17 KOs)
3. **MOISES FUENTES**
   Mexico | 16-1-1 (8 KOs)
4. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
   Mexico | 25-2-1 (16 KOs)
5. **KAZUTO IOKA**
   Japan | 35-2-3 (22 KOs)
6. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
   Philippines | 18-2-0 (10 KOs)
7. **KOMPAYAK PORPRAMOOK**
   Thailand | 49-4-0 (34 KOs)
8. **RYOICHI TAGUCHI**
   Japan | 18-1-1 (8 KOs)
9. **FELIX ALVARADO**
   Nicaragua | 15-0-0 (12 KOs)
10. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
    Mexico | 19-1-1 (13 KOs)

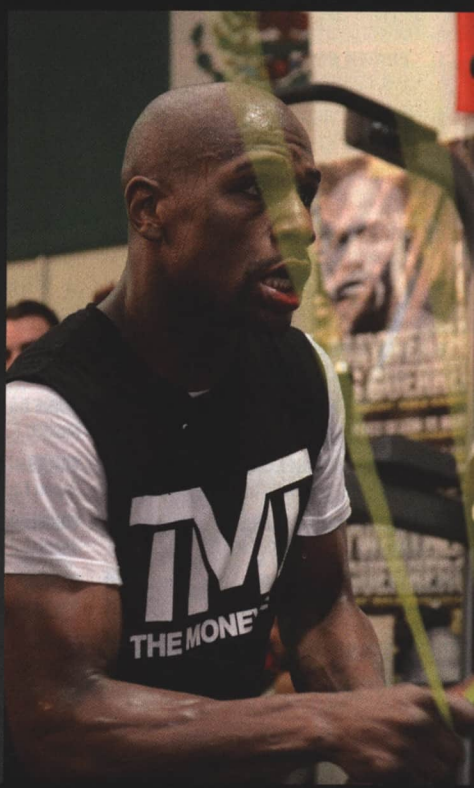
STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C VACANT

1. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines | 33-4-6 (21 KOs)
2. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
   Thailand | 27-0-0 (8 KOs)
3. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   South Africa | 23-1-0 (16 KOs)
4. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan | 25-6-0 (10 KOs)
5. **MARIO RODRIGUEZ**
   Mexico | 15-7-4 (11 KOs)
6. **RYO MIYAZAKI**
   Japan | 18-0-3 (10 KOs)
7. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
   South Africa | 22-1-0 (6 KOs)
8. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
   Nicaragua | 24-0-0 (15 KOs)
9. **JESUS SILVESTRE**
   Mexico | 27-3-0 (20 KOs)
10. **MERLITO SABILLO**
    Philippines | 21-0-0 (11 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
   U.S. | 43-0-0 (26 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT/ JR. MIDDLEWEIGHT
2. **ANDRE WARD**
   U.S. | 26-0-0 (14 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
3. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico | 55-6-1 (40 KOs) | JR. WELTERWEIGHT/ WELTERWEIGHT
4. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
   Argentina | 50-2-2 (28 KOs) | MIDDLEWEIGHT
5. **ADRIEN BRONER**
   U.S. | 26-0-0 (21 KOs) | LIGHTWEIGHT
6. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines | 54-5-2 (38 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
7. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
   Ukraine | 59-3-0 (50 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT
8. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
   U.S. | 31-1-1 (18 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
9. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   U.S. | 30-0-0 (12 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
10. **NONITO DONAIRE**
    Philippines | 31-2-0 (20 KOs) | JR. FEATHERWEIGHT



THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

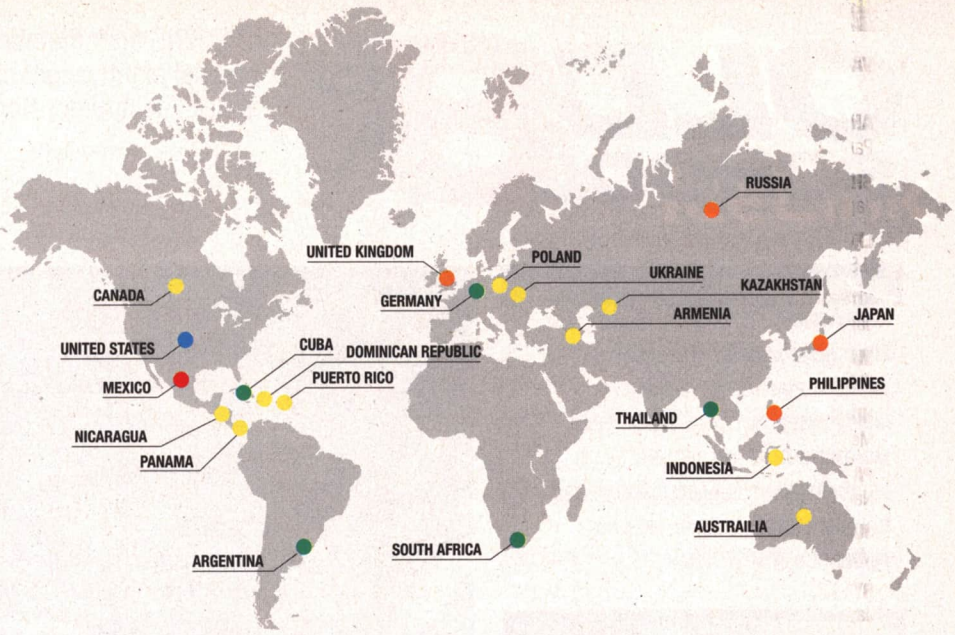
A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

MEXICO	30-*
UNITED STATES	29-*
JAPAN	17
UNITED KINGDOM	16
RUSSIA	14
PHILIPPINES	10
CUBA	5
GERMANY	5
SOUTH AFRICA	5
THAILAND	5
ARGENTINA	4
AUSTRALIA	3
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	3
NICARAGUA	3
POLAND	3
PUERTO RICO	3
UKRAINE	3
ARMENIA	2
CANADA	2
KAZAKHSTAN	2
PANAMA	2
BULGARIA	1
CAMEROON	1
DENMARK	1
FINLAND	1
FRANCE	1
GHANA	1
INDONESIA	1
JAMAICA	1
MALAWI	1
NAMIBIA	1
NIGERIA	1
ROMANIA	1
UGANDA	1
UZBEKISTAN	1

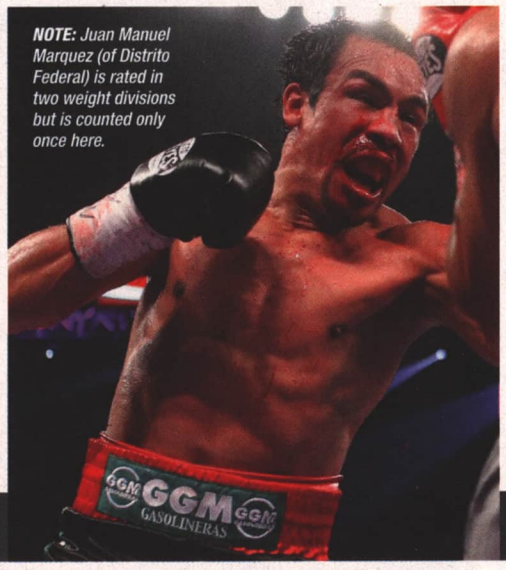
** Includes two ratings for Floyd Mayweather Jr. (junior middleweight, welterweight) and Juan Manuel Marquez (welterweight and junior welterweight).*



MEXICAN CRADLES

The states that produced the 29 RING-rated Mexican boxers (including the biggest city or cities in each state).

8 – SINALOA (CULIACAN, LOS MOCHIS)
7 – DISTRITO FEDERAL (MEXICO CITY)
4 – JALISCO (GUADALAJARA)
2 – SONORA (HERMOSILLO)
2 – BAJA CALIFORNIA (TIJUANA, MEXICALI)
1 – NAYARIT (TEPIC)
1 – QUINTANA ROO (CANCUN)
1 – MICHOACAN (MORELIA)
1 – GUANAJUATO (LEON)
1 – HIDALGO (PACHUCA DE SOTO)
1 – CHIHUAHUA (CHIHUAHUA)



***NOTE:** Juan Manuel Marquez (of Distrito Federal) is rated in two weight divisions but is counted only once here.*

AMERICAS VS. THE WORLD

The fact that fighters from 35 countries are rated by THE RING is evidence that boxing is flourishing around the world. However, nowhere is that more the case than in the Americas. Here's a look at how the Americas – North, South and Central – compare with the rest of the world in terms of rated fighters.

DIVISION	AMERICAS	WORLD
HEAVYWEIGHTS	1	10
CRUISERWEIGHTS	2	9
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	3	8
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	3	8
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	3	8
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	10	1
WELTERWEIGHTS	8	2
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	7	4
LIGHTWEIGHTS	6	4
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	7	3
FEATHERWEIGHTS	8	3
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	3	8
BANTAMWEIGHTS	4	6
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	3	7
FLYWEIGHTS	6	5
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	5	5
STRAWWEIGHTS	3	7
TOTAL	82	98

Mayweather: Naoki Fukuda; Marquez: Getty Images

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes. Our guest this month is RING contributor Norm Frauenheim.

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: ADRIEN BRONER
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
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LIGHTWEIGHT: ADRIEN BRONER
FEATHERWEIGHT: CHRIS JOHN
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

LEM SATTERFIELD STAFF WRITER

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
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WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
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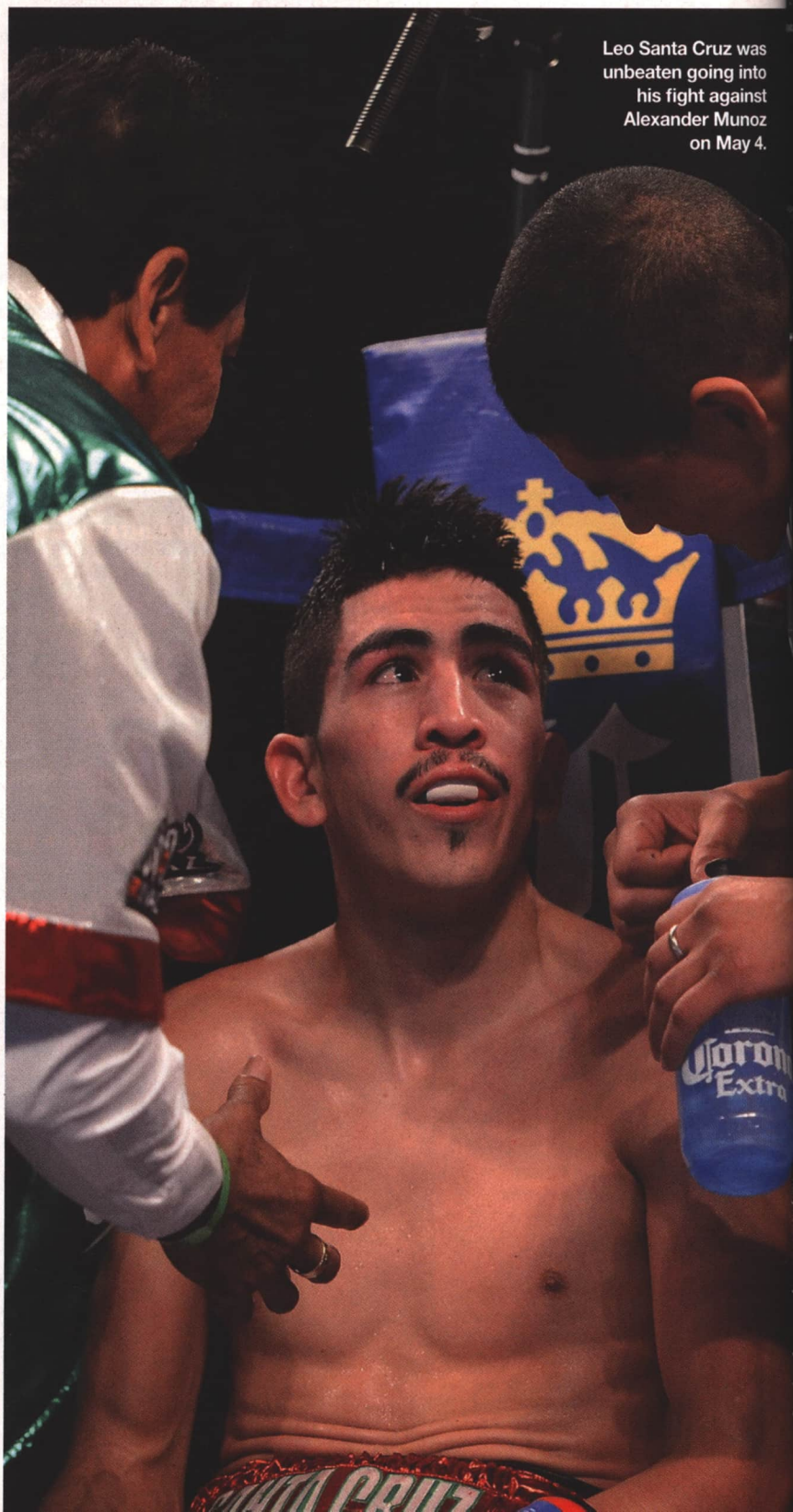
NORM FRAUENHEIM BOXING WRITER

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: ADRIEN BRONER
FEATHERWEIGHT: MIKEY GARCIA
BANTAMWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*



Leo Santa Cruz was unbeaten going into his fight against Alexander Munoz on May 4.

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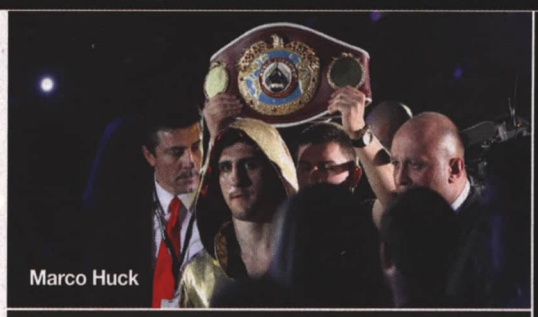
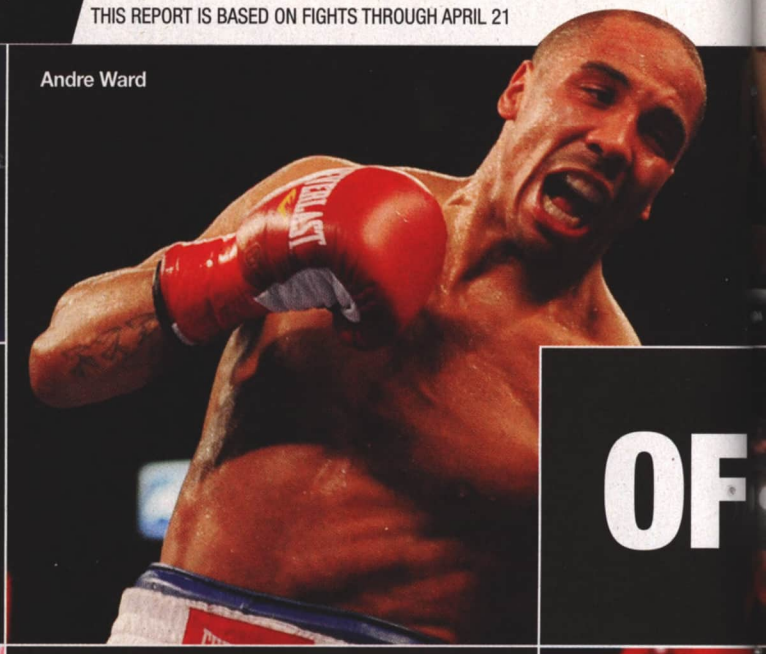
THIS REPORT IS BASED ON FIGHTS THROUGH APRIL 21

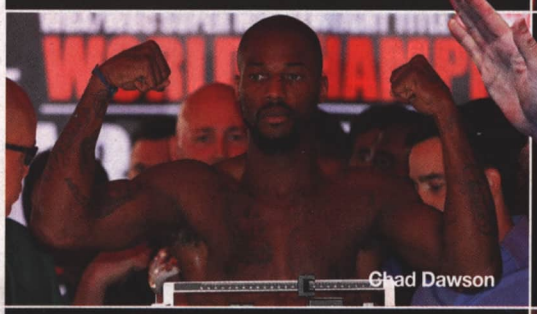


Marco Huck

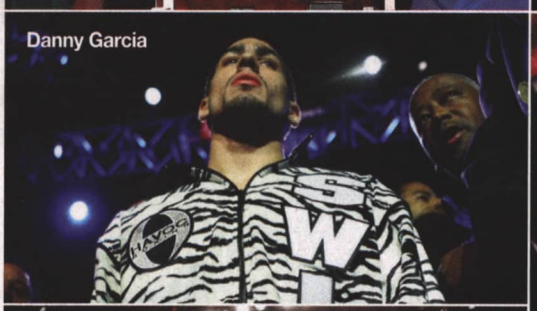


Andre Ward

THE STATE OF



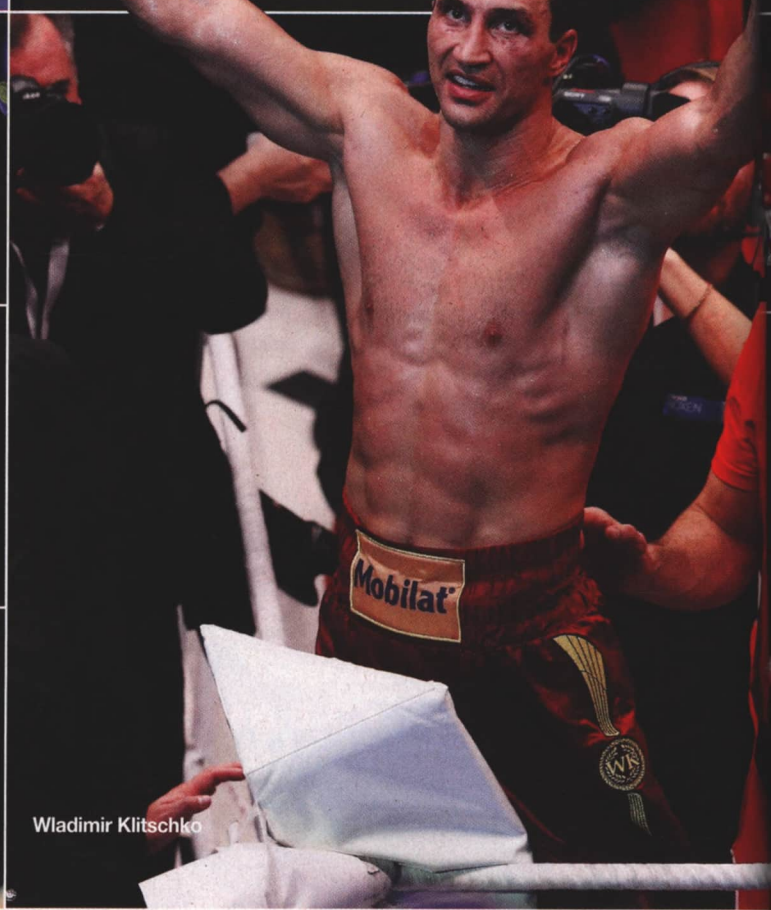
Chad Dawson



Danny Garcia

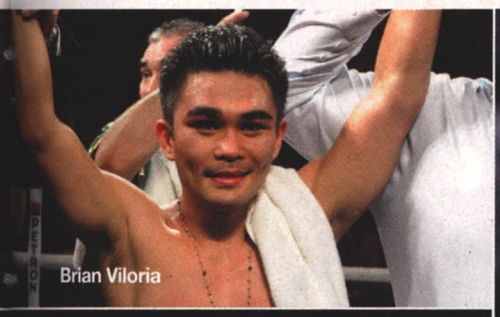
Sergio Martinez

Omar Narvaez



Wladimir Klitschko

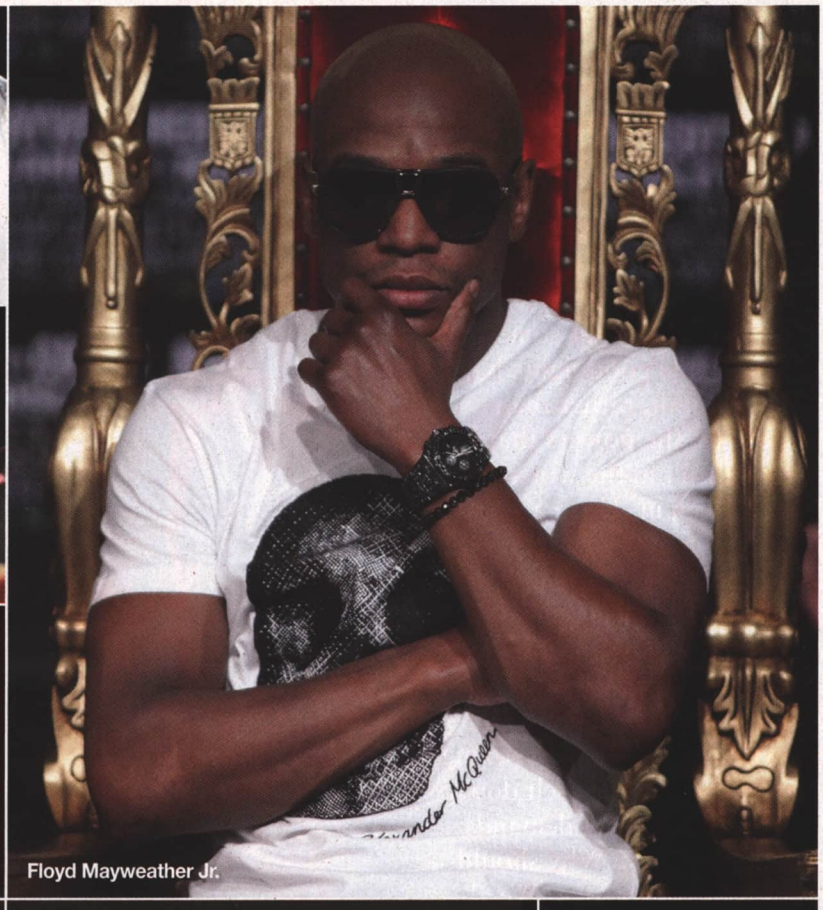
(1) Huck:Karina Hessland/Bongarts/Getty Images; (2) Ward: MARK RALSTON/AFP/Getty Images; (3) Rigondeaux: Naoki Fukuda; (4) Mayweather: JOHN GURZINSKI/AFP/GettyImages; (5) Dawson: Ezra Shaw/Getty Images; (6) Garcia: Al Bello/Getty Images for Golden Boy Promotions; (7) Klitschko: Joern Pollex/Bongarts/Getty Images; (8) Broner: Al Bello/Golden Boy/Golden Boy/Getty Images; (9) Alverez: Josh Hedges/Getty Images; (10) Martinez: Al Bello/Getty Images; (11) Narvaez: ALEJANDRO PAGNI/AFP/Getty Images; (12) Gonzalez: TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/Getty Images.



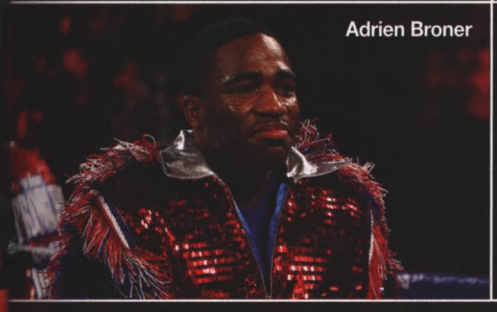
Brian Viloria

Guillermo Rigondeaux

THE

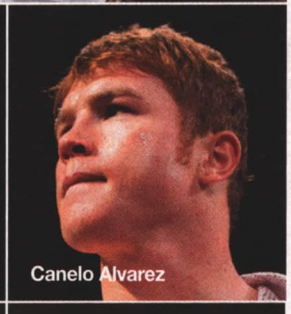


Floyd Mayweather Jr.



Adrien Broner

GAME



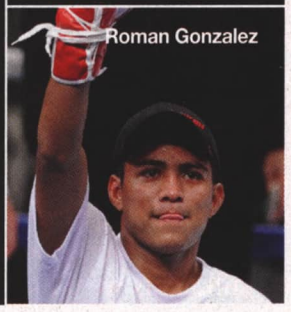
Canelo Alvarez

THE RING'S EXCLUSIVE DIVISION-BY-DIVISION REPORT

By **Don Stradley**

When putting together our annual State of the Game report, the tendency is to be optimistic. We try to put a happy spin on even the dourest situations. Floyd Mayweather Jr. never fought Manny Pacquiao? Well, at least we had the two of them living on the same planet and that was cool, right? Too many bad decisions? Well, at least the fights are going 12 rounds, right? That's the glass-half-full philosophy. Lately, though, our good cheer sounds hollow, even to us.

As we looked over each weight class for this year's report, the problems of the sport kept coming to the fore. We wanted to forget the negative part of boxing and focus on the athletes. But how can one do that when nearly every fighter we look at is guilty of something, whether it be failing a drug test, or not fighting outside of his hometown, or working for a promoter who doesn't want to play with the



Roman Gonzalez

HEAVYWEIGHT

other promoters, or building up his record by fighting tomato cans? Fighters will say "it's not about the money" and then they balk at fighting someone because they aren't getting paid enough. Now and then a great fight takes place, but sometimes it appears the good fights happen in spite of, rather than because of, the powers that be.

Boxing isn't in the worst shape it's ever been in. There are some admirable fighters at work today, and we give them their due on the following pages. But when the highlight of the week is listening to Mayweather's grandmother drop an F-bomb on Showtime, it's clear that boxing is happily dumbing itself down for an audience that demands very little from it. Why should boxing try to improve? We already buy what they're selling. If someone puts on a pay-per-view event and nobody buys it, maybe then you'll see some changes.

In the meantime, our State of the Game gives a brief snapshot of each weight class in 2013. The accompanying sidebars include a couple of categories that may need some explaining. "Deserves a Title Shot" is tricky, because most ranked fighters have already had a title shot or even worn a title belt. But we offer names of fighters who might deserve a second chance, or perhaps we'll mention a belt holder we'd like to see face a RING champion. And "Matchmaker's Dream" can mean different things, such as a bout that would unify titles, or in some cases, just a fight we'd like to see.

Yes, despite our grousing, there are still fights we'd like to see.

It may be our imagination but even with the addition of some new faces to the division, the heavyweights seem stuck in the same quagmire they have been in for years. Russia's heavyweight duo of Denis Boytsov and Alexander Povetkin remain undefeated, but Povetkin's latest win was over 40-year-old Hasim Rahman and Boytsov is still fighting eight-rounders in Belgium. The United Kingdom's Tyson Fury, who stopped the much smaller Steve Cunningham in his American debut in April, is becoming a bigger player in the division.

Finland's Robert Helenius was less than impressive recently against journeyman Michael Sprott (UD 10). Sometimes Helenius looks like Thor himself coming to knock the hell out of the division; now he's beginning to look like Joe Bugner. (Google him if you don't get the reference.) And Kubrat Pulev is beating the same journeymen as everyone else, but with only 19 fights on his ledger he's doing it in a shorter amount of time. The rest of the heavyweight Top 10 is made up of guys who have had their title shots and aren't likely to create much interest: David Haye, Ruslan Chagaev, Tomasz Adamek and Tony Thompson, who scored a big upset by stopping the U.K.'s gigantic youngster David Price in two rounds in February.

Champion Wladimir Klitschko continues his unlikely reign, having defended his throne twice since last year's State of the Game, first by obliterating Thompson (KO 6) and then by winning a relatively easy 12-round decision over Poland's Mariusz Wach. Wach landed some good shots early in the bout, but Klitschko doesn't crumble the way he once did. Klitschko was scheduled to fight unheralded Francesco Pianeta in May.

THINK ABOUT IT:
Vitali Klitschko, 41, remains the WBC titlist and THE RING's top-ranked contender for his brother's championship but is talking more seriously about retirement. As much as we admire Vitali, his retirement might be a good thing for the division. We're getting a little tired of his easy wins over bland mandatory challengers. And unless he agrees to a challenge from someone like Fury, there's little he can do to create excitement. If he retires, the WBC belt is up for grabs, and perhaps someone like Fury or Helenius could get it, setting up a unification bout with RING, WBA, WBO and IBF champion Wladimir Klitschko. That's not exactly Ali-Frazier, but it's something. ★

Wladimir Klitschko remains the king of heavyweights.

BEST PUNCHER
WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

BEST BOXER
WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

MOST PROTECTED
MALIK SCOTT

IS HE STILL AROUND?
OLIVER MCCALL

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
EITHER KLITSCHKO VS. TYSON FURY

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
TYSON FURY

MOST FUN TO WATCH
CHRIS ARREOLA

ON THE WAY UP
DEONTAY WILDER

ON THE WAY DOWN
DERECK CHISORA

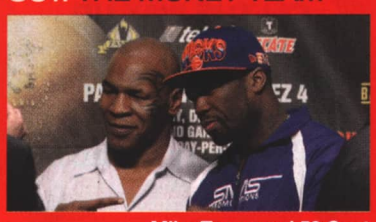
BEST FIGHT IN 2012
SETH MITCHELL KO 3 CHAZZ WITHERSPOON

WHAT'S IN AND WHAT'S OUT IN 2013

IN: MAYWEATHER JUMPING TO SHOWTIME
OUT: MAYWEATHER JUMPING INTO THE RING WITH MANNY

IN: FIGHTERS ON TWITTER
OUT: FIGHTERS SAYING ANYTHING MEMORABLE

IN: 50 CENT
OUT: THE MONEY TEAM



Mike Tyson and 50 Cent

IN: FIGHTERS BEING SUSPENDED
OUT: FIGHTERS LEARNING THEIR LESSON

IN: FIGHTS AT RADIO CITY
OUT: FIGHTS ON THE RADIO

IN: ROBERT GARCIA
OUT: FREDDIE ROACH

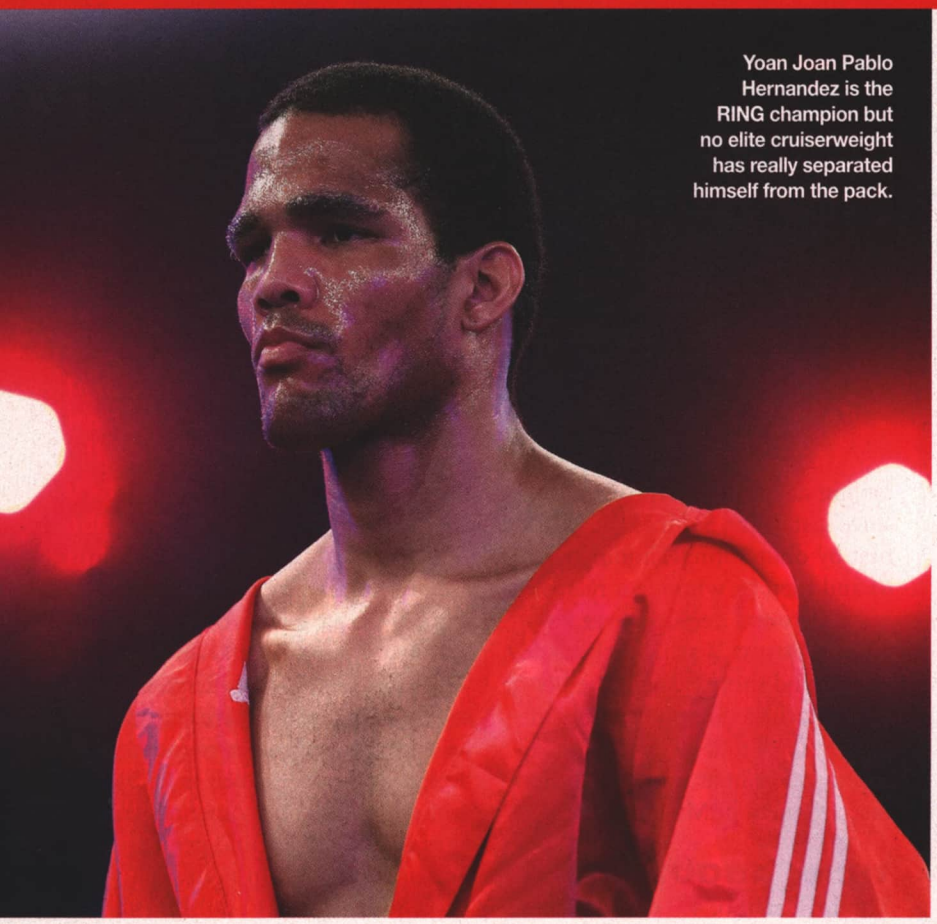
IN: BERNARD HOPKINS AT 48
OUT: GLEN JOHNSON AT 44

IN: FIGHTERS NAMING THEIR PRICE
OUT: DAVID PRICE

IN: BANNED SUBSTANCES
OUT: HEAVYWEIGHTS WITH SUBSTANCE

IN: BARCLAYS CENTER
OUT: IRAN BARKLEY

CRUISERWEIGHT



Yoan Joan Pablo Hernandez is the RING champion but no elite cruiserweight has really separated himself from the pack.

This division appears to be in a "watch and wait" mode. RING and IBF champion Yoan Pablo Hernandez made one defense since last year's State of the Game, a unanimous decision over Canada's Troy Ross. WBC titlist Krzysztof Wlodarczyk defended once against Francisco Palacios (UD 12). And WBA beltholder Denis Lebedev scored a fourth-round stoppage of Santander Silgado for his lone defense in recent times, although he has a bout scheduled for May against former titlist Guillermo Jones. Marco Huck retained the WBO title with a hard-earned majority draw against Ola Afolabi (they have a rematch pending in May) and turned in another of his crowd-pleasing performances with a unanimous decision win over Firat Arslan.

Huck's heavyweight experiment is apparently over, and he seems happy to be back at cruiserweight. He might be the division's breakout star if he were willing to fight outside of Germany, but the cruiserweights exemplify a problem in modern boxing: Each of the titlists has settled into a little fiefdom, with Huck and Hernandez fighting almost exclusively in Germany, Wlodarczyk keeping his activity limited to Poland and Lebedev staying in Russia. Maybe Hernandez will eventually defend the RING belt against Huck, which could be a big bout for Germany since Huck has become a sort of working-class cult hero over there. With Don King promoting his next bout, one can't tell how Huck's immediate future will pan out.

The rest of the class is uneven. Lateef Kayode is talking about jumping to heavyweight, Antonio Tarver is still under suspension after a failed drug test last June and young Russian gold medalist Rakhim Chakhkiev remains untested after only 16 pro bouts. Meanwhile, Ukraine's Dmytro Kucher fought six times in 2012 and his first effort of 2013 was a near shutout decision over Julio Cesar Dos Santos. There is talent in the division. Will they get around to fighting each other? Or are they waiting to see who gets to beat up Roy Jones Jr. this year?

BEST PUNCHER
MARCO HUCK

BEST BOXER
YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ

MOST PROTECTED
RAKHIM CHAKHKIEV

IS HE STILL AROUND?
EPIFANIO MENDOZA

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
MARCO HUCK VS. MATEUSZ MASTERNAK

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
MATEUSZ MASTERNAK

MOST FUN TO WATCH
MARCO HUCK

ON THE WAY UP
YUNIER DORTICOS

ON THE WAY DOWN
RICHARD HALL

BEST FIGHT OF 2012
GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI SD 12 SILVIO BRANCO

THINK ABOUT IT:

Poland's Mateusz Masternak fought four times since the last State of the Game. Along with wins over Hari Miles (UD 10), David Quinonero (KO 8), Juho Haapoja (UD 12) and Sean Corbin (TKO 9), he has shown a willingness to travel, fighting in Germany, Poland, and even New Jersey. Could he be the man to break the cruiserweights out of their home-cooking rut? ★

Hernandez: Christof Koepsel/Bongarts/Getty Images; Hopkins: Elsa/Getty Images; Boy/Golden Boy via Getty Images

When Bernard Hopkins defeated Tavoris Cloud for an alphabet belt, he cast a light on what is wrong with the 175-pound class. Granted, Hopkins is a great ring technician, and we may not see another fighter in our lifetime who is so impressive as far as longevity is concerned. But Hopkins is a 48-year-old part-time fighter who has already shown he can't hang with world champion Chad Dawson. Meanwhile, Dawson lost much of his luster when he was manhandled by super middleweight boss Andre Ward last year. Dawson can claim the weight loss bothered him but he's a lame-duck champion right now. And Hopkins, the most recognizable face in the division, won a belt because there are just so damn many to choose from. Hopkins was smart to challenge Cloud, a good but not great fighter who is not especially quick. That's the type of opponent Hopkins can still pick apart. He might have had less success against WBO titlist Nathan Cleverly, a quick, two-handed fighter.

Cleverly looked very good in his last bout, a one-sided decision over veteran Robin Krasniqi in April. The Welshman isn't a big puncher, but that's par for the division. The rest of the Top 10 is made up of Europeans and Russians, none of whom seem out to hurt anyone, with the exception of Sergei Kovalev. He has stopped 18 of 20 opponents, including Spain's classy Gabriel Campillo. Meanwhile, WBA titlist Beibut Shumenov has fought only once since last year at this time, an easy decision over journeyman Enrique Ornelas. As for the scheduled May bout between Jean Pascal and Lucien Bute, it won't mean as much to the light heavyweight class as it will to Montreal boxing fans.

The fight to watch might be Dawson vs. Adonis Stevenson, set for June in Montreal. Stevenson is a banger, and if he could take out RING champ Dawson, the tone of the division could change.

BEST PUNCHER
SERGEI KOVALEV

BEST BOXER
BERNARD HOPKINS

MOST PROTECTED
RYNO LIEBENBERG

IS HE STILL AROUND?
OMAR SHEIKA

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
SERGEI KOVALEV VS. ADONIS STEVENSON

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
SERGEI KOVALEV

MOST FUN TO WATCH
SERGEI KOVALEV

ON THE WAY UP
GAYRAT AHMEDOV

ON THE WAY DOWN
ENZO MACCARINELLI

BEST FIGHT OF 2012
TAVORIS CLOUD SD 12
GABRIEL CAMPILLO

THINK ABOUT IT:

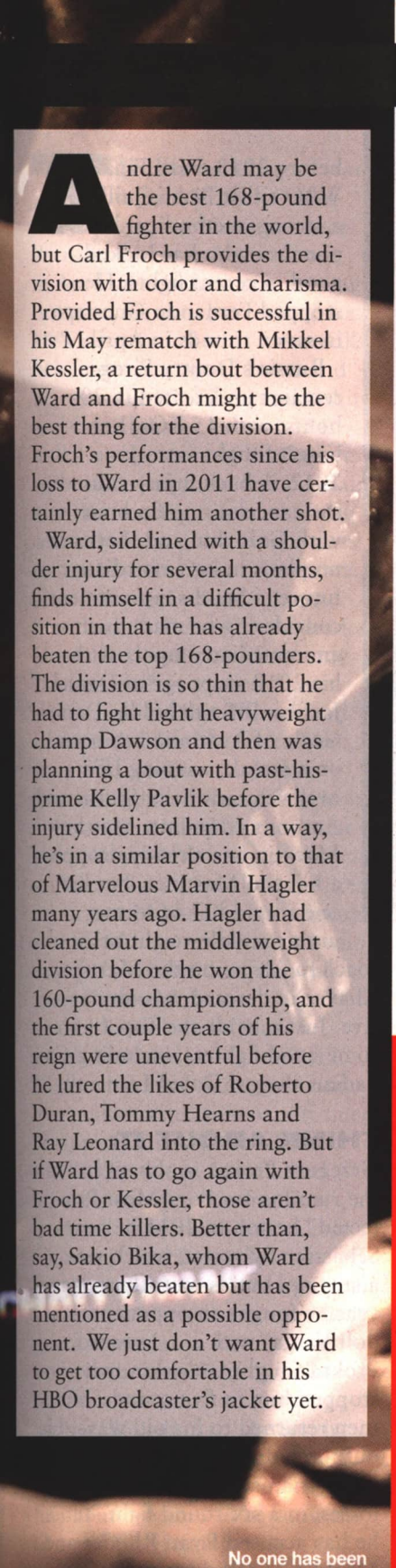
Kovalev is the sort of puncher who could ignite the division. Against Campillo, a smart fighter who has gone the distance in close bouts with Shumenov and Cloud, Kovalev looked like an absolute destroyer. He has also shown that he wants to conquer America by making his home in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and hooking up with veteran trainer Don Turner. If there's someone in the division who can create some excitement, it's this guy. ★

Bernard Hopkins continues to amaze us as he approaches his 50th birthday.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT

Andre Ward may be the best 168-pound fighter in the world, but Carl Froch provides the division with color and charisma. Provided Froch is successful in his May rematch with Mikkel Kessler, a return bout between Ward and Froch might be the best thing for the division. Froch's performances since his loss to Ward in 2011 have certainly earned him another shot.

Ward, sidelined with a shoulder injury for several months, finds himself in a difficult position in that he has already beaten the top 168-pounders. The division is so thin that he had to fight light heavyweight champ Dawson and then was planning a bout with past-his-prime Kelly Pavlik before the injury sidelined him. In a way, he's in a similar position to that of Marvelous Marvin Hagler many years ago. Hagler had cleaned out the middleweight division before he won the 160-pound championship, and the first couple years of his reign were uneventful before he lured the likes of Roberto Duran, Tommy Hearns and Ray Leonard into the ring. But if Ward has to go again with Froch or Kessler, those aren't bad time killers. Better than, say, Sakio Bika, whom Ward has already beaten but has been mentioned as a possible opponent. We just don't want Ward to get too comfortable in his HBO broadcaster's jacket yet.



No one has been able to figure out how to cope with Andre Ward's all-around ability.

BEST PUNCHER
ADONIS STEVENSON

BEST BOXER
ANDRE WARD

MOST PROTECTED
KENNY ANDERSON

IS HE STILL AROUND?
GLEN JOHNSON

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
ANDRE WARD VS. BERNARD HOPKINS

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
EDWIN RODRIGUEZ

MOST FUN TO WATCH
CARL FROCH

ON THE WAY UP
MARCO ANTONIO PERIBAN

ON THE WAY DOWN
AARON PRYOR JR.

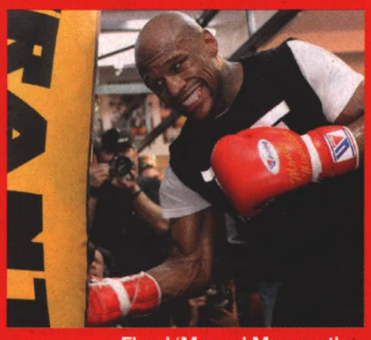
BEST FIGHT IN 2012
MIKKEL KESSLER KO 4 ALLAN GREEN

Lucian Bute is still in THE RING Top 10 at 168, but he's making a venture to 175 to face Jean Pascal. In his only fight since losing his title and perfect record by fifth-round knockout to Froch last May, Bute met Denis Grachev in November and looked very unsteady in front of his hometown Montreal crowd. He won the decision but did not look like the Bute of just a year ago. Few think he would handle Froch in a contracted rematch that seems to be on the shelf for now. Bute is young and a classy boxing stylist, but he appears to be showing the vulnerability we have suspected since his close call with Librado Andrade in their first bout.

THINK ABOUT IT:
Since losing to Ward in 2009, Denmark's Kessler has racked up four impressive wins, including a hard-fought points verdict over Froch and a devastating fourth-round KO of Allan Green. If Froch deserves a second shot at Ward should he beat Kessler, the same should be said about the Dane. At 34, Kessler is still reasonably young, but he's also a veteran of 48 pro bouts and has been subject to some injuries and cuts. He's an old 34. ★

TITLEHOLDERS VS. TITLEHOLDERS

ONE OF THE WAYS TO CALCULATE A FIGHTER'S WORTH IS TO COUNT THE NUMBER OF WINS HE HAS OVER OTHER TITLEHOLDERS. HERE'S HOW THE RING'S POUND-FOR-POUND TOP 10 STACK UP:



Floyd 'Money' Mayweather

17	F. MAYWEATHER JR. (1.)
10	W. KLITSCHKO (7.)
9	NONITO DONAIRE (10.)
7	J.M. MARQUEZ (3.)
5	ROBERT GUERRERO (8.)
5	TIMOTHY BRADLEY (9.)
4	ANDRE WARD (2.)
4	SERGIO MARTINEZ (4.)
3	ADRIEN BRONER (5.)

MIDDLEWEIGHT

Middleweight champ Sergio Martinez at press time was scheduled to fight Matthew Macklin.

The middleweight class is easy to love, starting with the aging but ever classy champion Sergio Martinez. The 38-year-old Argentine had to work extremely hard but got past sturdy Martin Murry in April to retain his RING championship and has a full cast of quality contenders on his trail.

WBA king Gennady Golovkin, fresh off a third-round KO of Nobuhiro Ishida, is probably the biggest threat to Martinez's top spot. The division's bad boy, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., will be returning to action soon after a lengthy suspension for failing a drug test. Chavez lost a one-sided decision to Martinez last year but did more during the dramatic final moments of that bout to solidify his status as a top middleweight than he had in his entire career. It's likely we will see Martinez-Chavez II before 2013 ends. Finally, WBO titlist Peter Quillin is a strong, methodical boxer-puncher who has looked good in recent fights. He stopped Fernando Guerrero in seven rounds in April.

Russia's Dmitry Pirog remains undefeated in 20 bouts, with 15 KOs, but hasn't fought since June 2012. A back injury caused the cancelation of a bout with Golovkin and there are no plans in his immediate future, a big disappointment considering he made such an immediate impact with his 2010 stoppage of Daniel Jacobs. IBF titleholder Daniel Geale of Australia has been on a streak, winning bouts over veterans Felix Sturm and Anthony Mundine. Matthew Macklin has already dropped a bout to Martinez, but his one-round KO of former junior middleweight titlist Joachim Alcine on the Martinez-Chavez undercard was impressive. Just outside the Top 10 are some good fighters, including Canadian slugger David Lemieux.

BEST PUNCHER
GENNADY GOLOVKIN

BEST BOXER
SERGIO MARTINEZ

MOST PROTECTED
GRZEGORZ PROKSA

IS HE STILL AROUND?
BRONCO MCKART

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
SERGIO MARTINEZ VS. GENNADY GOLOVKIN

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
GENNADY GOLOVKIN

MOST FUN TO WATCH
GENNADY GOLOVKIN

ON THE WAY UP
J'LEON LOVE

ON THE WAY DOWN
RONALD HEARNS

BEST FIGHT OF 2012
SERGIO MARTINEZ UD 12 JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.

THINK ABOUT IT:

Grzegorz Proksa is always in the running for our "Most Protected" honor. In 2011 he beat Sebastian Sylvester, which was a step up, but as recently as last year he fought an opponent (Rudolf Varga) with a 1-1 record. Proksa fought Golovkin, who stopped him in five rounds, but then returned to his old ways: He outpointed Norbert Szekeres, a Hungarian scrub horse with 20 losses, in a six-round fight. Yet he has accused Ryan Rhodes and Macklin of taking easy fights. Oh, we get it. Proksa has such trouble finding opponents that he has to fight guys with 1-1 records. Sure. ★

Martinez: Jeff Bottari/Getty Images; Alvarez: Naoki Fukuda

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT

The division's biggest star is Saul "Canelo" Alvarez, but his unanimous-decision win over Austin Trout in April wasn't the major coming out party he may have hoped for. He's a strong kid with some skills, he's undefeated in 43 bouts and he owns the RING championship and two alphabet belts at 154. Still, let's see more of him before we rush to judgment and proclaim him the next big this-or-that. He certainly has a good weight class to test himself against. There are plenty of good young fighters here, such as Demetrius Andrade, Delvin Rodriguez and Erislandy Lara, as well as respected veterans including Miguel Cotto and Ishe Smith. Floyd Mayweather Jr. is still at welterweight but has dabbled at 154 and will probably tangle with Alvarez at some point. Vanes Martirosyan remains undefeated. Yet, for all of the great talent at 154 pounds, it's a fighter with five losses on his record who may get to shake things up this year: Carlos Molina.

Since his flukish DQ loss to James Kirkland in March 2012, Molina has won twice, including a unanimous decision over former champion Cory Spinks. Prior to the Kirkland loss, Molina had a points win over Kermit Cintron and draws with Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. and Lara. He isn't a big puncher, and he tends to have bad luck, but Molina can give a pretty good argument to just about anybody in the ring. Beating Spinks put him in position to challenge for the IBF belt that Ishe Smith recently won by beating Cornelius Bundrage on points. A Smith-Molina bout is bound to be competitive and entertaining.

The wild card of the class is Cotto. He has lost two in a row. He is 32. He is fighting above his prime weight. Yet, Cotto is still competitive and would probably like to avenge last year's loss to Trout, while a Cotto-Alvarez bout would be a moneymaker. But how much does he have left? He's been through some tough fights. Can Cotto still go toe to toe with the best? Or will 2013 be the year where he becomes a stepping stone?

BEST PUNCHER
JAMES KIRKLAND

BEST BOXER
ERISLANDY LARA

MOST PROTECTED
CHARLIE OTA

IS HE STILL AROUND?
GRADY BREWER

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
MIGUEL COTTO VS. JAMES KIRKLAND

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
VANES MARTIROSYAN

MOST FUN TO WATCH
CANELO ALVAREZ

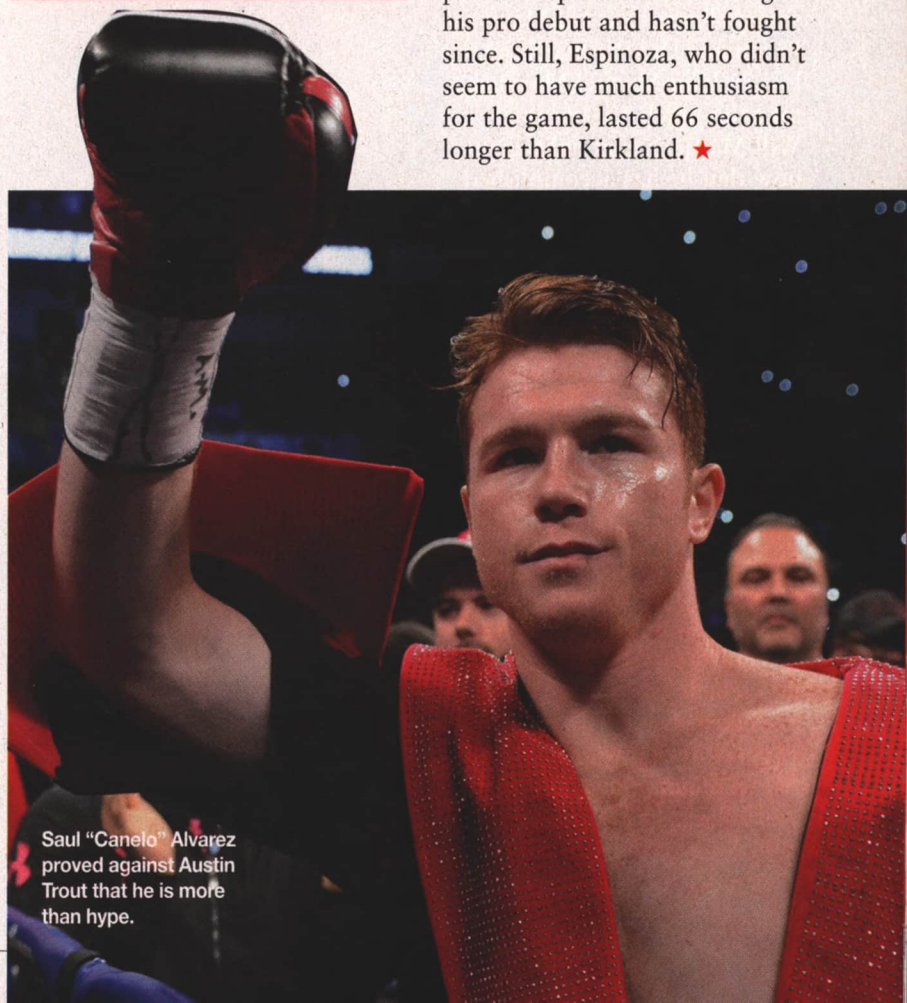
ON THE WAY UP
DEMETRIUS ANDRADE

ON THE WAY DOWN
ALFONSO GOMEZ

BEST FIGHT OF 2012
FLOYD MAYWEATHER UD 12 MIGUEL COTTO

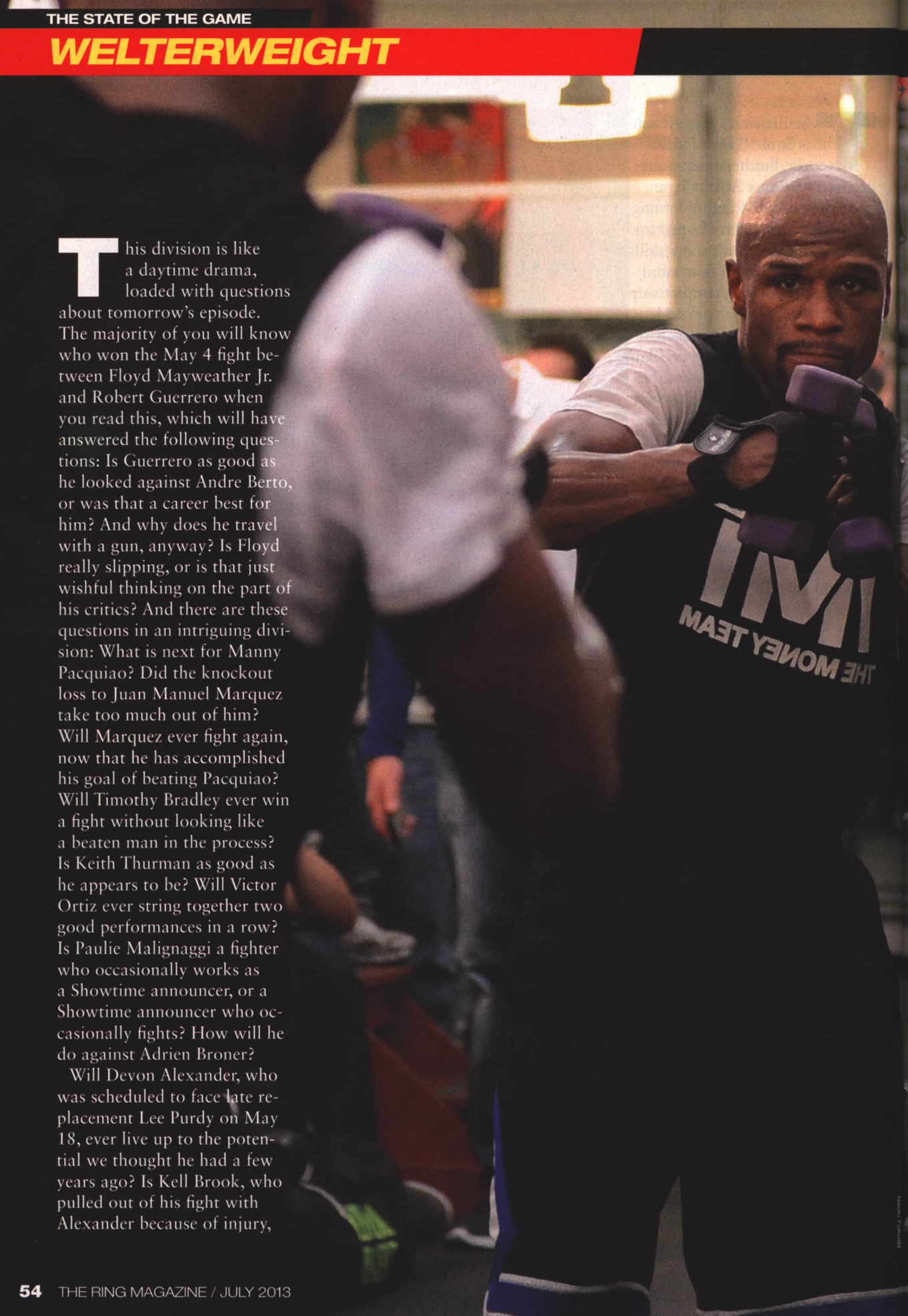
THINK ABOUT IT:

It's been two years since Kirkland suffered a shocking one-round TKO loss to Nobuhiro Ishida. Since then, Ishida has had nothing but grief, losing nearly every round in decision losses to Paul Williams and Dmitry Pirog, and then getting splattered by Golovkin. Ishida's only win since beating Kirkland was at Monumental Plaza de Toros in Mexico City, where Ishida scored a one-round TKO win over Edson Espinoza. Espinoza was making his pro debut and hasn't fought since. Still, Espinoza, who didn't seem to have much enthusiasm for the game, lasted 66 seconds longer than Kirkland. ★



Saul "Canelo" Alvarez proved against Austin Trout that he is more than hype.

WELTERWEIGHT



This division is like a daytime drama, loaded with questions about tomorrow's episode. The majority of you will know who won the May 4 fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Robert Guerrero when you read this, which will have answered the following questions: Is Guerrero as good as he looked against Andre Berto, or was that a career best for him? And why does he travel with a gun, anyway? Is Floyd really slipping, or is that just wishful thinking on the part of his critics? And there are these questions in an intriguing division: What is next for Manny Pacquiao? Did the knockout loss to Juan Manuel Marquez take too much out of him? Will Marquez ever fight again, now that he has accomplished his goal of beating Pacquiao? Will Timothy Bradley ever win a fight without looking like a beaten man in the process? Is Keith Thurman as good as he appears to be? Will Victor Ortiz ever string together two good performances in a row? Is Paulie Malignaggi a fighter who occasionally works as a Showtime announcer, or a Showtime announcer who occasionally fights? How will he do against Adrien Broner?

Will Devon Alexander, who was scheduled to face late replacement Lee Purdy on May 18, ever live up to the potential we thought he had a few years ago? Is Kell Brook, who pulled out of his fight with Alexander because of injury,

Floyd Mayweather Jr. was a significant favorite going into his May 4 fight against Robert Guerrero.

BEST PUNCHER
KEITH THURMAN

BEST BOXER
FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

MOST PROTECTED
VITALIY DEMYANENKO

IS HE STILL AROUND?
LUIS COLLAZO

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
TIMOTHY BRADLEY VS. KEITH THURMAN

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
KEITH THURMAN

MOST FUN TO WATCH
MANNY PACQUIAO

ON THE WAY UP
SHAWN PORTER

ON THE WAY DOWN
ISAAC HLATSHWAYO

BEST FIGHT IN 2012
JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ KO 6 MANNY PACQUIAO

as good as his perfect record indicates or just another overhyped British product? Can Ruslan Provodnikov live up to the expectations we now have after seeing him take Bradley to the brink?

THINK ABOUT IT:
Pacquiao's face-down knockout loss to Marquez certainly felt like a career changer. But many fighters, including Ken Norton, Roberto Duran and Emile Griffith, returned from similar knockout losses and had some great fights. Chances are that Pacquiao can do the same. Then again, if there has been a fighter who burned the candle to a nub in recent years, it was Pacquiao. You can only be a boxing champion, recording artist, actor, national icon and politician for so long before your schedule catches up to you. If he's all done, he has certainly earned every accolade he's been given. We don't think he's done, but there is a sense that Top Rank is moving him into the "faded glory" phase of his career, with talk of him fighting around the world to avoid America's expensive taxes. With Marquez apparently choosing Bradley over a fifth fight against Pacquiao, we may see Pacman on a kind of worldwide farewell tour, taking on lesser opponents in glitzy international locations. In other words, Top Rank will showcase Pacquiao until people stop buying tickets. ★

TITLEHOLDERS BY COUNTRY

The United States pulled ahead of Mexico this year, with the help of a few Mexican-American fighters. Japan and Mexico are tied for second, with Germany and Russia placing higher than last year at this time. Where America really scored was in THE RING's Pound for Pound ratings, with five of our top 10 P4Pers coming from our side of the world. (Note: This list includes RING champions and WBA, WBC, IBF and WBO titleholders.)

U.S. 14	KAZAKHSTAN . 2	NICARAGUA 1
JAPAN 8	UKRAINE 2	NAMIBIA 1
MEXICO 8	AUSTRALIA..... 1	PANAMA..... 1
RUSSIA 4	CHINA..... 1	POLAND 1
CUBA..... 3	COLOMBIA..... 1	PUERTO RICO .. 1
PHILIPPINES ... 3	DOMINICAN REP. 1	SOUTH AFRICA 1
UNITED KINGDOM..... 3	GERMANY 1	
ARGENTINA..... 2	INDONESIA..... 1	

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT

Way back in March, Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer proposed a junior welterweight unification tournament involving Danny Garcia, Zab Judah, Lamont Peterson, Lucas Matthysse and Amir Khan. That sounded interesting enough, but when two of the most exciting junior welterweights in the business – Top Rank's Mike Alvarado and Brandon Rios, who are 1-1 in two compelling fights – aren't involved, you get a very clear picture of one of boxing's biggest problem: bickering promoters and rival networks. And why does Golden Boy want to stage a tournament, anyway? Is it just to kill time before Adrien Broner can decide what weight class to join? Garcia is THE RING's champion. But does that mean anything if he won't be fighting the best fighters?

Rather than beating a dead horse (which would be more entertaining than what we get on some pay-per-view undercards), let's ignore promoters where this division is concerned and focus on something else. How about Russia's Denis Shafikov? At 27, he's quietly posted a record of 32-0-1 (17

David Becker/Getty Images for Golden Boy Promotions

RING champ Danny Garcia rules a deep junior welterweight division.

BEST PUNCHER
LUCAS MATTHYSSE

BEST BOXER
AMIR KHAN

MOST PROTECTED
VERNON PARIS

IS HE STILL AROUND?
DEMARCUS CORLEY

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
LUCAS MATTHYSSE VS. BRANDON RIOS

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
LUCAS MATTHYSSE

MOST FUN TO WATCH
BRANDON RIOS

ON THE WAY UP
TERENCE CRAWFORD

ON THE WAY DOWN
NATE CAMPBELL

BEST FIGHT IN 2012
BRANDON RIOS
KO 7 MIKE ALVARADO

KOs). Shafikov has good footwork and a nice southpaw jab, and although he spent the first few years of his career feasting on soft opposition in Finland and Russia, he's proven to be a solid ring general. Last year saw him take his game to a new level. He went 4-0 in 2012, including a stoppage of hometown favorite Lee McAllister in Aberdeen, Scotland (McAllister quit in the eighth with a hand injury). And he won his first fight in 2013. He's one of the sport's best-kept secrets.

THINK ABOUT IT:
Here's Vernon Paris. He's a Don King fighter. He has fought a lot of weak opponents. Last year he was matched against Zab Judah, because King's people probably thought Judah was washed up. Judah stopped Paris in nine. Vernon's next fight was against Guy Packer, a 38-year-old from Kalamazoo, Mich., with 38 losses on his record. Paris stopped Packer in three. We hope he didn't celebrate too much. He gets our vote for "Most Protected." ★

LONGEST REIGNING TITLEHOLDERS

The list below showcases the game's 10 most established titleholders (RING, WBA, WBC, IBF or WBO). A few of last year's names are gone: Lucien Bute, Guillermo Jones, Vyacheslav Senchenko and Robert Stieglitz.

CHRIS JOHN
WBA FEATHERWEIGHT
92 MONTHS

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
RING, IBF, WBO, WBA
HEAVYWEIGHT
83 MONTHS

ANSELMO MORENO
WBA BANTAMWEIGHT
58 MONTHS

VITALI KLITSCHKO
WBC HEAVYWEIGHT
53 MONTHS

TIMOTHY BRADLEY
WBO WELTERWEIGHT
48 MONTHS

MARCO HUCK
WBO CRUISERWEIGHT
44 MONTHS

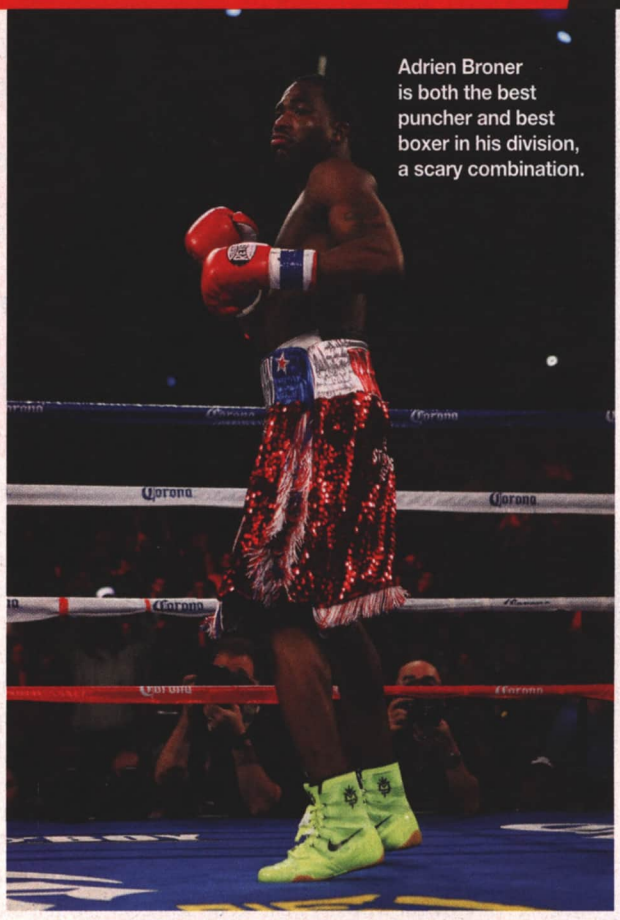
MORUTI MTHALANE
IBF FLYWEIGHT
40 MONTHS

ANDRE WARD
RING, WBC, WBA SUPER
MIDDLEWEIGHT
40 MONTHS

TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
WBA FEATHERWEIGHT
39 MONTHS

BEIBUT SHUMENOV
WBA LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT
39 MONTHS

LIGHTWEIGHT



Adrien Broner is both the best puncher and best boxer in his division, a scary combination.

Adrien Broner is fun. Without him, we'd spend the next few paragraphs discussing Ricky Burns and Kevin Mitchell. But Broner is not quite the savior of boxing that he pretends to be. If he were, he'd be calling out Floyd Mayweather Jr. every day, running him down on Twitter, playing Ali to Floyd's Sonny Liston. That's what Broner should be doing, instead of posting pictures of himself on Twitter eating ice cream. True, Broner may not be big enough yet, or savvy enough, but Mayweather has a six-fight Showtime contract to fill up. If Broner starts pounding the drums now, he can be ready in time to be Mayweather's sixth opponent. If nothing else, he could use the chase of the pound-for-pound king to hype himself, even if the pairing never comes off. For some, there was no more depressing moment in recent months than when Mayweather made a lame *Karate Kid* reference regarding Broner: "Daniel-san never went against Mr. Miyagi," Mayweather said. "Don't let them [the media] make us bump heads."

Meanwhile, Broner should have said, "Screw that B.S. We're gonna fight, old dude. It's time for a changing of the guard!" Instead, Broner seems content to do his goofy little dances, court the hip-hop crowd and forge a career as a second rate Mayweather imitator. True, in recent months he has knocked out Antonio DeMarco and Gavin Rees, but both had been stopped before and neither is headed for Canastota. The recipe for Broner to follow should be forget the lightweights, dump his WBC belt in the nearest trash bin, test the waters against Malignaggi and then start calling Mayweather out. Forget being friendly with the guy. Sure, it's probably fun to hang out at the mansion, but if Broner would rather play a friendly game of hoops with Floyd instead of fighting him, that makes him look like a sucker. If Broner is content to have the torch symbolically passed rather than ripping it out of Floyd's hands, then he's not what boxing needs. What's the point of being a hunter if you don't aim for the big game?

Yuriorkis Gamboa is rated No. 2 at junior lightweight but has announced he's moving up in weight to face 135-pounder Darley Perez on June 8. Gamboa has endured business problems and hasn't been as active as he should be; he has fought only once since last year's State of the Game, winning a 12-round decision over Michael Farenas.

BEST PUNCHER
ADRIEN BRONER

BEST BOXER
ADRIEN BRONER

MOST PROTECTED
MASON MENARD

IS HE STILL AROUND?
DORIN SPIVEY

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
ADRIEN BRONER VS. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
RAYMUNDO BELTRAN

MOST FUN TO WATCH
ADRIEN BRONER

ON THE WAY UP
EDIS TATLI

ON THE WAY DOWN
MIGUEL ACOSTA

BEST FIGHT OF 2012
NIHITO ARAKAWA TKO 8 TAKEHIRO SHIMADA

THINK ABOUT IT:

One of boxing's great Cinderella stories has been going on right under our noses, and it involves IBF titleholder Miguel Vazquez. This guy lost his pro debut to Canelo Alvarez in 2006 in Mexico. He lost again to Alvarez in 2008, and in between lost to Timothy Bradley. Since the second loss to Alvarez, Vazquez has reeled off 12 consecutive wins, including a victory over Ji-Hoon Kim (UD 12) for the vacant IBF title. He has successfully defended the belt five times. The old adage about fighters becoming better once they win a belt certainly applies to Vazquez. ★

Broner: Al Bello/Golden Boy/Getty Images; Uchiyama: Sanher via Getty Images

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT

In April, WBO titlist Roman Martinez turned back the challenge of previously undefeated Diego Magdaleno in Macau, coming away with a split-decision win. It also was his third consecutive close contest, having drawn with Juan Carlos Burgos in January in New York and winning the belt on a splitter from Miguel Beltran. It appears "Rocky" likes to keep things close.

The same can't be said for hard-punching WBA titlist Takashi Uchiyama of Japan, who KO'd Bryan Vasquez in eight rounds in his most recent title defense. Uchiyama remains THE RING's top-rated 130-pounder. Argenis Mendez of the Dominican Republic avenged a previous loss to Juan Carlos Salgado by stopping him in four rounds in March. Mendez gained the IBF title in the process and made himself a player in the division. At 26, he's one of the younger fighters in the weight class. Journeyman Gamaliel Diaz scored an upset over Takahiro Ao (UD 12) last October in Ao's home country of Japan. Diaz had nine losses on his record and was probably seen as easy pickings for Ao. The feel-good story was short-lived, though. On April 8, Diaz went back to Japan and lost the title to hard-punching southpaw Takashi Miura. Diaz was bloodied, beaten, and bludgeoned to the canvas four times before the bout was stopped in the ninth round.

Finally, Sergio Thompson crashed our ratings recently after a string of wins, highlighted by a KO last year of Jorge Linares. Linares has been stopped in two of his last three bouts and three of his last eight. Eventually, beating him won't mean anything. Thompson got to him when there is still a bit of cachet left in defeating "El Niño de Oro."

BEST PUNCHER
TAKASHI UCHIYAMA

BEST BOXER
ARGENIS MENDEZ

MOST PROTECTED
SERGEI GULYAKEVICH

IS HE STILL AROUND?
ROCKY JUAREZ

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
TAKASHI UCHIYAMA VS SERGIO THOMPSON

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
GARY BUCKLAND

MOST FUN TO WATCH
TAKASHI UCHIYAMA

ON THE WAY UP
WILL TOMLINSON

ON THE WAY DOWN
MARTIN HONORIO

BEST FIGHT OF 2012
YURIORKIS GAMBOA UD 12 MICHAEL FARENAS

THINK ABOUT IT:

By the time this issue is in the hands of the public, two years will have passed since Edwin Valero murdered his wife and then committed suicide. Valero won his first title at this weight class by beating Vicente Mosquera in Panama. He was a lightweight at the end and, had he not gone down a tragic path, maybe he would still be. Maybe he'd be getting ready to face Broner by now. Or maybe he would be at 140, facing Rios and Alvarado. We wonder what he could've accomplished. ★

Hard-punching Takashi Uchiyama (left, fighting Roy Mukhlis) is THE RING's top-rated junior lightweight.

FEATHERWEIGHT

Complete fighter Mikey Garcia (right, fighting Rafael Guzman) is rapidly growing in stature.

RING champion and WBO titlist Mikey Garcia could well be the cream of the 126-pound class. Here's hoping he stays there long enough to face rising star Gary Russell Jr. Since last year at this time, Russell has won three in a row: Christopher Perez (KO 3), Roberto Castaneda (KO 3) and Vyacheslav Gusev (UD 10). Russell is 24, Garcia is 25. We might be very lucky that the two are at the same weight and have hit the sport at roughly the same time.

Chris John continues his lengthy reign as WBA titlist, defeating Shoji Kimura (UD 12) and Chonlatarn Piriyapinyo (UD 12) since this time last year. At 33, John is undefeated in 50 bouts. He's been heavily criticized for not fighting the best competition, but some of his recent fights have been more exciting than usual. The aging master boxer is settling down a bit and trading punches, and it has been fun to watch. He and Satoshi Hosono fought to a technical draw after John was cut on April 14.

Daniel Ponce de Leon scored an eighth-round technical decision over Jhonny Gonzalez for the WBC belt last fall and was scheduled to make his first defense against Abner Mares on the Mayweather-Guerrero undercard. Meanwhile, Billy Dib lost the IBF title to Evgeny Gradovich by split decision, which may be remembered as one of the year's biggest upsets.

Gonzalez returned to action in February and beat Eusebio Osejo (UD 12). Gonzalez is a 31-year-old warhorse with 61 fights on his ledger, but he will always be competitive. We'd always hoped for a bout between Gonzales and Juan Manuel Lopez, but after Lopez returned from a lengthy suspension for accusing referees of gambling, he scored a win over Aldimar Silva Santos (KO 9) and announced he wanted to leave the featherweight class to fight at 130.

BEST PUNCHER
MIKEY GARCIA

BEST BOXER
MIKEY GARCIA

MOST PROTECTED
JORGE LARA

IS HE STILL AROUND?
CORNELIUS LOCK

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
MIKEY GARCIA VS. GARY RUSSELL JR.

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
RONNY RIOS

MOST FUN TO WATCH
MIKEY GARCIA

ON THE WAY UP
LEE SELBY

ON THE WAY DOWN
EUSEBIO OSEJO

BEST FIGHT IN 2012
ORLANDO SALIDO KO 10 JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ

THINK ABOUT IT:

Orlando Salido looked suspiciously old and small against Garcia, didn't he? This was odd, since he had looked like such a dynamo against Juan Manuel Lopez in their two bouts. His fights against Lopez were inspiring because he was an older fighter with a bunch of losses on his record who appeared to have rejuvenated himself through hard work and dedication. He gave hope to all of us over-the-hill types that we, too, could become jacked-up supermen and knock people out. Could he have done something different in training this time? Could he have left something out? Any ideas? Anyone? ★

Garcia: Jeff Gross/Getty Images; Hypnotic: Heidi Fuhrer

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT

BEST PUNCHER
NONITO DONAIRE

BEST BOXER
GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX

MOST PROTECTED
HIDENORI OTAKE

IS HE STILL AROUND
CRUZ CARBAJAL

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX VS. VIC DARCHINYAN

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
TOMOKI KAMEDA

MOST FUN TO WATCH
VIC DARCHINYAN

ON THE WAY UP
ANDRES GUTIERREZ

ON THE WAY DOWN
STEVE MOLITOR

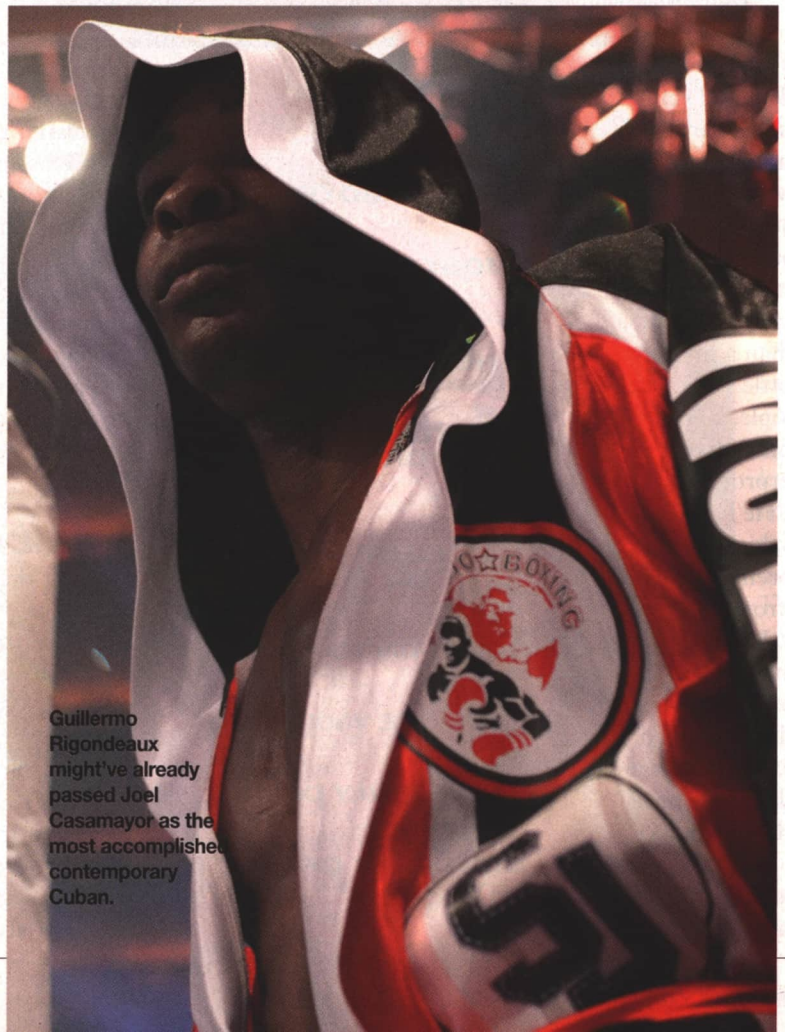
BEST FIGHT IN 2012
JUAN REYES UD 6 OSCAR VENEGAS

The junior featherweight class experienced a major shakeup on April 13 when Guillermo Rigondeaux defeated Nonito Donaire (UD 12). Now recognized as THE RING, WBA and WBO titlist, Rigondeaux established himself as unquestionably the premiere fighter at 122 pounds. But even if he'd be an overwhelming favorite against anyone in the weight class, it is still a pretty good class.

Fernando Montiel could still be a force. After a rough 2011 that saw him lose twice, he won three bouts in 2012. He's a ring craftsman and can't be taken lightly, even at age 34. Vic Darchinyan, who has lost two of his last three, is 37. He might be past his best, but he is the sort of fighter who won't rest until he gets another shot at Donaire, who stopped him in 2007. Darchinyan's last fight was a win over Luis Orlando Del Valle (UD 10). He's been inactive for several months but has been talking trash. He's a rarity – a bully who keeps picking on people even after he's had his ass kicked a few times. Could Rigondeaux shut him up once and for all?

On the younger side of the street, the United Kingdom's Scott Quigg had barely any amateur background before turning pro in 2007, but is undefeated in 26 pro bouts. He's a good puncher, and though he rarely fights outside of his Lancashire hometown, he hasn't been fighting weaklings to pad his record. 2012 saw him fight Rendall Munroe twice. The first bout ended in a technical draw when Munroe was badly cut after an accidental head clash. Quigg won the rematch, dropping Munroe twice with body shots in the sixth. He's good. There is talk that Quigg may face Belfast's Carl Frampton in a big U.K. promotion. Frampton has beaten some good opponents, including former titlist Steve Molitor (KO 6).

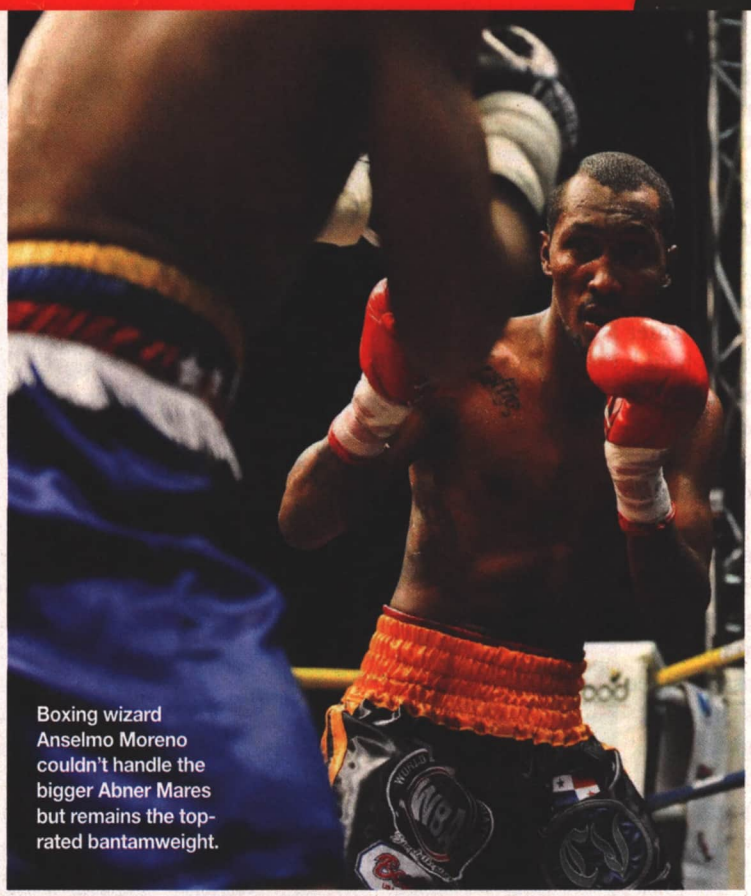
Abner Mares is leaving the junior featherweights and was scheduled to challenge for Daniel Ponce de Leon's WBC featherweight belt on May 4. Donaire, too, may be moving up. Still, the junior featherweights are good. Japan's Hozumi Hasegawa and Tomoki Kameda, and Colombia's Jonathan Romero, may move up the ranks to challenge new champ Rigondeaux, while Victor Terrazas got past Christian Mijares in a thrilling fight in April.



Guillermo Rigondeaux might've already passed Joel Casamayor as the most accomplished contemporary Cuban.

THINK ABOUT IT: Cubans have generally failed to live up to expectations when they turn pro. The most recent Cuban to make noise in the pro ranks was Joel Casamayor. He had some good years, but overall his career is pretty forgettable. Can Rigondeaux top Casamayor's efforts? Some would say that in beating Donaire he already has done exactly that. ★

BANTAMWEIGHT



Boxing wizard Anselmo Moreno couldn't handle the bigger Abner Mares but remains the top-rated bantamweight.

After failing to beat Abner Mares at 122 last November, Anselmo Moreno is likely to come back to the bantamweight class where he has been recognized as the WBA titlist since 2008. The setback didn't tarnish Moreno's reputation too much. He overcame a knockdown and kept the fight close against a younger, bigger opponent. Should he decide to continue his campaign at 118, there are certainly enough opponents for him.

Japan's Koki Kameda recently won a close, somewhat disputed split decision over Thailand's Panomroonglek Kaiyanghadaogym. The fight was a sizzler, with plenty of action over 12 rounds. Kameda, one of Japan's major stars, has lasted much longer than anyone had anticipated. Many thought he was nothing more than a mouthy kid with relatively little substance. He has offended people, he has been accused of winning fixed fights and being overprotected, but he has endured. He has had more than 30 bouts, losing only once. Kameda has been around so long that he's gone from being an upstart to a veteran. But there are always new young bangers on the way, including Julio Ceja of Mexico. The 20-year-old has stopped 22 of 24 opponents. Ceja will battle Jamie McDonnell for the once-again vacant IBF title on May 11. Ceja was scheduled to battle Jamie McDonnell for the once-again vacant IBF title on May 11. Traveling to McDonnell's Yorkshire, England, turf for the opportunity was bold.

Paulus "The Rock" Ambunda recently defeated Pungluang Sor Singyu (UD 12) for the WBA belt. We doubt Ambunda, a 2004 Olympian, will have a major impact on the division since he tends to fight in his hometown of Windhoek, Namibia. Maybe he'll become Namibia's Chris John. In April, southpaw Shinsuke Yamanaka retained the WBC title by stopping Malcolm Tunacao in the 12th round of a good bout. Undefeated Yamanaka is a consistently entertaining fighter. Another of the division's entertainers, 24-year-old Leo Santa Cruz, fought four times since this time last year and was scheduled to face Alexander Munoz on the Mayweather-Guerrero undercard.Tough veteran Joseph Agbeko was out of action for several months with promoter problems but returned in March to beat Colombia's Luis Melendez (UD 12).

BEST PUNCHER
JULIO CEJA

BEST BOXER
ANSELMO MORENO

MOST PROTECTED
DIEGO RICARDO SANTILLAN

IS HE STILL AROUND?
RAUL MARTINEZ

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
LEO SANTA CRUZ VS. ANSELMO MORENO

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
ROLLY MATSUSHITA

MOST FUN TO WATCH
KOKI KAMEDA

ON THE WAY UP
FELIPE ORUCUTA

ON THE WAY DOWN
ERIC MOREL

BEST FIGHT OF 2012
SHINSUKE YAMANAKA KO 7 TOMAS ROJAS

THINK ABOUT IT:

State of the Game wouldn't feel right without including recently retired Jorge Arce. He was named as last year's "Best Puncher" and "Most Fun to Watch" at bantamweight, and even as he reached the ripe old age of 33, he still gave the customers plenty of bang for their buck. In his last bout, where he was badly overmatched against Nonito Donaire, he never stopped trying. ★

Moreno: MIGUEL GUTIERREZ/AP/Getty Images; Narvaez: Jose Luis Lazaro/AP/Getty Images

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT

BEST PUNCHER
CARLOS CUADRAS

BEST BOXER
OMAR NARVAEZ

MOST PROTECTED
PETCH SOR CHITPATTANA

IS HE STILL AROUND?
JULIO CESAR MIRANDA

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ JR. VS. CARLOS CUADRAS

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
CARLOS CUADRAS

MOST FUN TO WATCH
CARLOS CUADRAS

ON THE WAY UP
MCJOE ARROYO

ON THE WAY DOWN
HYOBU NAKAGAMA

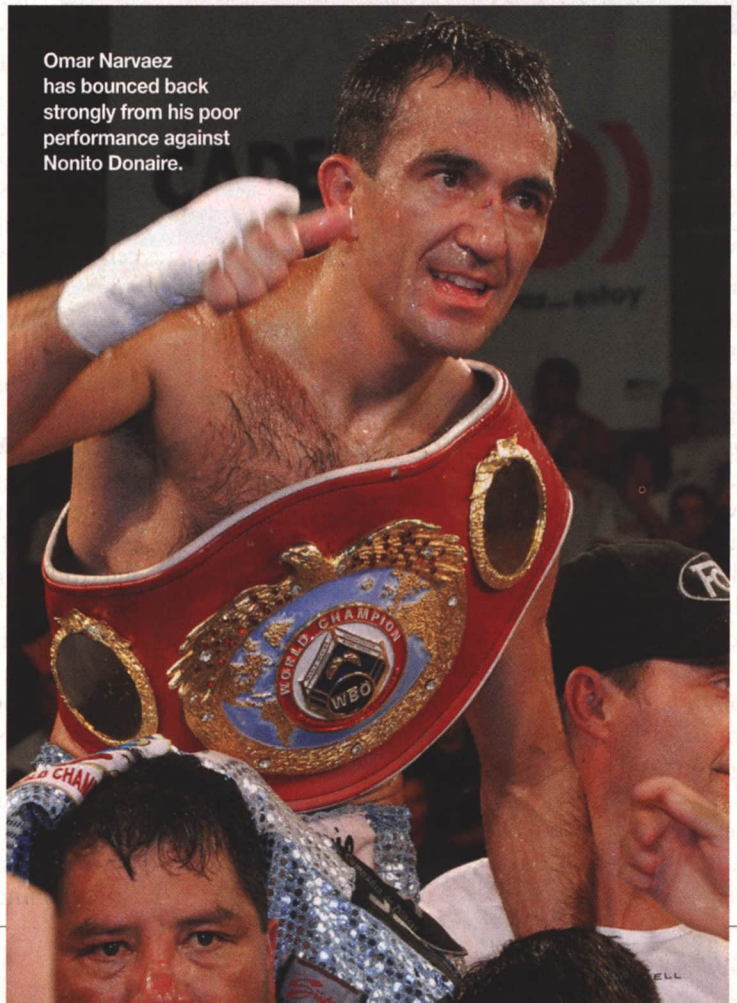
BEST FIGHT OF 2012
KOHEI KONO KO 4 TEPPARITH KOKIETGYM

WBO titlist Omar Narvaez hasn't completely erased the bad taste in our mouths after his non-performance against Nonito Donaire, but he's been busy. Since his unparalleled choke-job against "The Filipino Flash," Narvaez has scored wins over Jose Cabrera (UD 12), Johnny Garcia (KO 11) and David Quijano (UD 12). These were wipeouts, with Narvaez winning nearly every round of every bout. Apparently, if Narvaez stays in Argentina and fights at 115, he turns into Jake LaMotta. He was scheduled at press time to fight Daniel Rosas on May 25.

The month of May was also scheduled to see WBA titleholder Kohei Kono defend against Venezuela's Liborio Solis. Japan's Kono, who at one time lost three consecutive bouts and seemed done, won the WBA laurels from Thailand's Tepparith Kokietgym (KO 4) last December. Kokietgym had been on a bit of a tear through Japan prior to losing the belt. Since losing to Kono, he returned to Thailand for a points win over Daiboy Sajiro, an inexperienced pug who was obviously fodder for the record. Kokietgym now has a May 10 date with another jobber, Jecker "Bam Bam" Buhawe. As for WBC titlist Yota Sato, he was due to defend against Srisaket Sor Rungvisai on May 3.

Carlos Cuadras could be the fighter to watch at this weight. The 24-year-old Mexican is undefeated in 28 bouts, with 23 ending inside the distance. He's yet to fight outside of Mexico as a pro, but he's won some minor belts for the old curio cabinet and his recent victims include Ronald Barrera (KO 7), Fernando Lumacad (UD 12) and Victor Zaleta (KO 7). Since IBF titlist Juan Carlos Sanchez Jr. is also a Mexican who rarely fights outside of Los Mochis, perhaps we can look forward to an all-Mexican shootout for the IBF belt one of these days. Sanchez won the belt last year from Rodrigo Guerrero (UD 12) and has since defended against Juan Alberto Rosas (UD 12) and Rodel Mayol (KO 9).

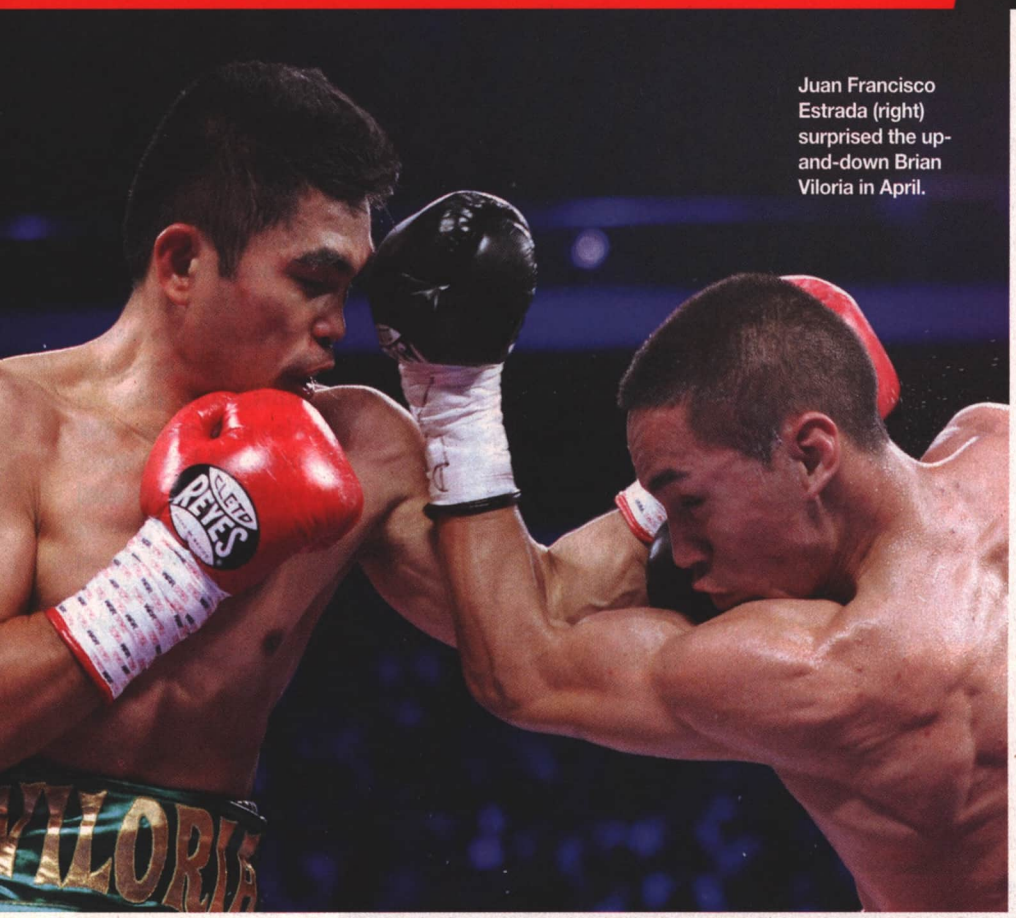
This division is not without talent. It is all a matter of getting the top contenders to venture beyond their zip codes to fight each other.



Omar Narvaez has bounced back strongly from his poor performance against Nonito Donaire.

THINK ABOUT IT:
Maybe there is a reason for the junior bantamweights to stay close to home. Mayol, of the Philippines, has six losses and two draws on his record, and each one came on the road. Thai Suriyan Sor Rungvisai has five losses and a draw, and four of those verdicts happened outside of Thailand. Then again, Kono's seven career losses all took place in Japan, most at Korakuen Hall in Tokyo. He even lost his pro debut in 2000. When you're so comfortable losing at home, there's no reason to travel. ★

FLYWEIGHT



Juan Francisco Estrada (right) surprised the up-and-down Brian Viloria in April.

The up-and-down career of Brian Viloria continues. After having one of the best years of his career in 2012, with wins over Omar Nino and Hernan Marquez, Viloria recently lost his WBA and WBO titles by split decision to Juan Francisco Estrada. As we have grown accustomed to seeing from Viloria, it was a good fight and a rematch may be in order. Estrada had lost two of his last six bouts and was coming up in weight, but he scored what would have to be considered a mild upset, finishing strong in the late rounds as Viloria tired. We've counted Viloria out before, and he has always returned. This bout, which took place in Macau at the Venetian Resort, will not be his swansong.

In another recent upset, Akira Yaegashi defeated THE RING and WBC flyweight titlist Toshiyuki Igarashi over 12 bloody rounds. Yaegashi has become known as one of the premiere battlers in the lighter divisions, his bouts known for intense exchanges, dramatic shifts and bloodshed. Moruti Mthalane of South Africa continues his light schedule, fighting only once since last year at this time. He retained his IBF flyweight belt by defeating Ricardo Nunez (KO 8) in Panama. Mthalane has had only six bouts in four years. Are fighters avoiding this guy? Don't they want a crack at the IBF title?

Milan Melindo, an undefeated Filipino flyweight, could make waves at 112. In one of his recent bouts, he overcame a damaged eye and late rally from Jean Piero Perez to win a majority decision. It was the sort of bout that shows a fighter's character, and Melindo certainly has some. He needs to improve his competition, though. Even Perez, who gave him hell, was coming off a KO loss and probably considered a safe bet.

BEST PUNCHER
HERNAN "TYSON" MARQUEZ

BEST BOXER
BRIAN VILORIA

MOST PROTECTED
MILAN MELINDO

IS HE STILL AROUND?
OMAR SOTO

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
BRIAN VILORIA VS. ROMAN GONZALEZ

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
EDGAR SOSA

MOST FUN TO WATCH
BRIAN VILORIA

ON THE WAY UP
JONATHAN GONZALEZ

ON THE WAY DOWN
OMAR NINO

BEST FIGHT OF 2012
BRIAN VILORIA KO 10 HERNAN MARQUEZ

THINK ABOUT IT:

Giovani Segura was supposed to be the savior of the lighter weight classes, having twice beaten the Puerto Rican star Ivan Calderon. Since losing a punishing bout to Viloria in 2011, Segura has slowly been rebuilding his career. His May bout with former titlist Edgar Sosa should give us an idea of where he stands these days. We hope the 31-year-old slugger can make one more run at a title, for boxing can always use a charismatic puncher like Segura. ★

Viloria: Dario De La Rey/Afp/Getty Images; Gonzalez: Jeff Bottari/Getty Images

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT

This division has been packed with good fighters and wild fights for a few years now, and Nicaragua's Roman Gonzalez remains the class' hard-slugging kingpin. Along with being THE RING's top-rated 108-pounder, he owns one of the best offensive arsenals in the sport. Since this time last year, "El Chocolatito" has defeated Ramon Garcia Hirales (KO 4), Stiven Monterrosa (KO 3) and, in a good brawl, Juan Francisco Estrada (UD 12).

Thailand's Kompayak Porpramook briefly held the WBC junior flyweight title, winning it from Adrian Hernandez (KO 10) in 2011 and losing it back to him by sixth-round stoppage. Porpramook returned to the winner's circle in December with a win over Johan Wahyudi (KO 6). It may be nothing but a pipe dream, but we'd love to see Porpramook challenge Roman Gonzalez. The chances of it happening are slim as Thai fighters rarely leave their home turf. But Porpramook did go to Mexico for the rematch with Hernandez, so that's a good sign. Then again, Porpramook has had over 40 bouts, and he's a bit war torn. Some wonder how much longer he can last. He was scheduled at press time to fight Jean Piero Perez on April 26.

WBO titlist Donnie Nietes of the Philippines was held to a majority draw by young Moises Fuentes in March. A rematch should take place before the year is out.

BEST PUNCHER
ROMAN GONZALEZ

BEST BOXER
KAZUTO IOKA

MOST PROTECTED
FELIX ALVARADO

IS HE STILL AROUND?
ALBERTO ROSSEL

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
ROMAN GONZALEZ VS. KAZUTO IOKA

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
MOISES FUENTES

MOST FUN TO WATCH
ROMAN GONZALEZ

ON THE WAY UP
NAOYA INOUE

ON THE WAY DOWN
TAKASHI KUNISHIGE

BEST FIGHT OF 2012
ROMAN GONZALES UD 12 JUAN ESTRADA

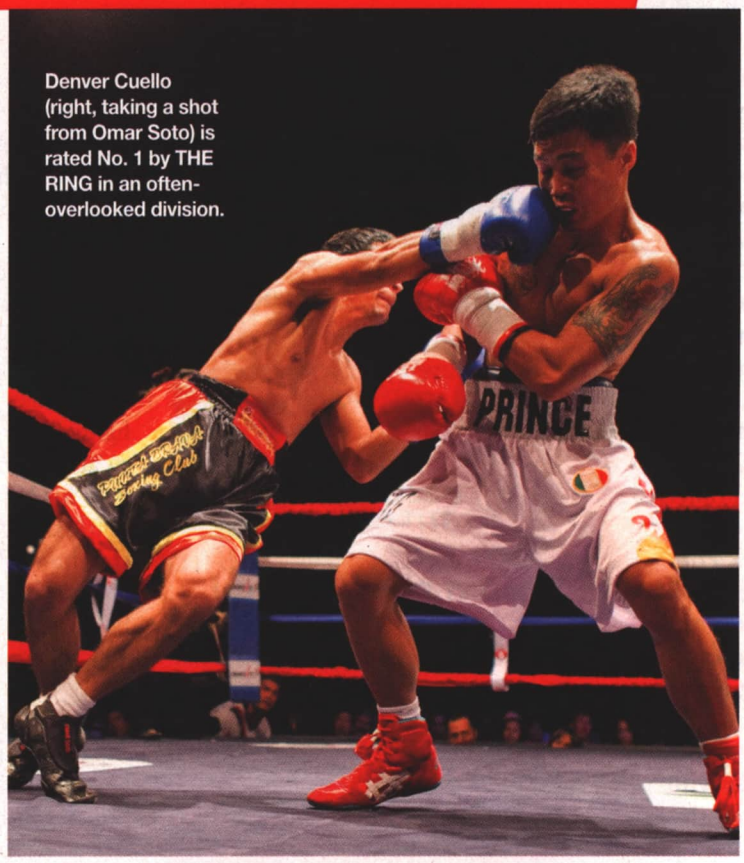
Unbeaten Roman Gonzalez is the best in a strong division.

Nicaragua's Felix Alvarado is undefeated after 15 bouts. He's still feasting on soft opponents but is another Nicaraguan banger, having stopped 12 of 15. Finally, WBC titlist Adrian Hernandez made a successful defense of the belt in January, beating Dirceu Cabarca (UD 12). Cabarca probably didn't deserve a title shot, but Hernandez has had some tough fights lately so he was entitled to an easy out. Here's hoping he puts his belt on the line against WBA boss Gonzalez in a unification bout. Zou Shiming, China's amateur star, turned pro in April, beating Eleazar Valenzuela (UD 4) in his debut bout in Macau.

THINK ABOUT IT:

Japan's undefeated Kazuto Ioka has had only 11 professional bouts, but he has already faced stiffer competition than most. In only his second pro bout, he faced Hiroshi Matsumoto, a veteran of 32 bouts. In his seventh bout, Ioka faced Oleydong Sithsamerchai, who was undefeated in 36 fights. Last December, he stopped Jose Alfredo Rodriguez (KO 6), who had 29 bouts on his record. And on May 8, Ioka was set to face 53-bout veteran Wisanu Kokietgym. It's no wonder his management is fearless; Ioka was an eight-time national amateur champion who amassed a record of 95-10 (64). His war at strawweight with Akira Yaegashi in June of 2012 was one of the best bouts of the year. ★

STRAWWEIGHT



Denver Cuello (right, taking a shot from Omar Soto) is rated No. 1 by THE RING in an often-overlooked division.

Strawweights don't get much love from American fans. After all, we are the world's most obese nation, and when the average American fifth grader weighs about 155 pounds, it's hard to sell a bunch of fighters weighing 105. Illiteracy is also high in the USA, and many strawweights have difficult names. The strawweight class had been part of amateur boxing, but wasn't recognized in the pros until the late 1980s. Perhaps a bunch of fighters protested fighting at 108, saying, "Look at those junior flyweights! They are freakin' huge! We need our own little weight class!" But the group has persisted. The current batch boasts a handful of interesting fighters.

Denver Cuello of the Philippines is THE RING's top-rated strawweight, although he has made noise about moving up to 108. His most recent bout was a 10-round majority decision win over Takashi Kunishige. Cuello's quest for a title has been a frustrating series of political hurdles. He was paid to step aside so that China's Xiong Zhao Zhong could win the vacant WBC belt in Nov. 2012, beating Javier Martinez Resendiz (UD 12). One of the biggest upsets of 2012 was journeyman Mario Rodriguez's seventh-round knockout of long-reigning IBF titlist Nkosinathi Joyi of South Africa. Joyi rebounded by stopping Walter Rojas in one round, and has a big bout scheduled for June with fellow South African Hekkie Budler. In the meantime, Rodriguez lost the IBF belt in March to Katsunari Takayama (UD 12). Takayama is colorful, although his record of 25-6 (10 knockouts) doesn't sparkle. Still, you have to like a guy from Osaka who quotes Muhammad Ali at press conferences and does the Ali shuffle.

Another notable but unheralded fighter in the weight class is Thailand's Paipharob Kokietgym, who is undefeated in 21 bouts and owns a victory over highly rated Jesus Silvestre (UD 12). Silvestre, a good puncher who has stopped 20 of 30 opponents, has won four in a row since losing to Kokietgym but seems content to fight soft opponents for minor titles in Mexico.

BEST PUNCHER
NKOSINATHI JOYI

BEST BOXER
CARLOS BUITRAGO

MOST PROTECTED
WANHENG MENAYOTHIN

IS HE STILL AROUND?
FLORANTE CONDES

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
NKOSINATHI JOYI VS. HEKKIE BUDLER

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
DENVER CUELLO

MOST FUN TO WATCH
PORNSAWAN PORPRAMOOK

ON THE WAY UP
CARLOS BUITRAGO

ON THE WAY DOWN
PORNSAWAN PORPRAMOOK

BEST FIGHT OF 2012
KAZUTO IOKA UD 12 AKIRA YAEGASHI

THINK ABOUT IT:

One of the key strawweights of recent years has been Jack Amisa, a 26-year-old Indonesian with 25 losses. He has provided record fodder for most of the top little men in the business, including Wanheng Menayothin, Nethra Sasiprapa, Yodmongkol Vor Saengthep, Kwanthai Sithmorseng, Paipharob Kokietgym, Pigmy Kokietgym, Bert Batawang, Kompayak Porpramook and the iconic Pongsaklek Wonjongkam. Some of these guys have beaten Amisa twice. If opponents are so scarce at 105, why don't these fighters just eat a sandwich and make 108? Then again, maybe Amisa enjoys having his face beat in. ★

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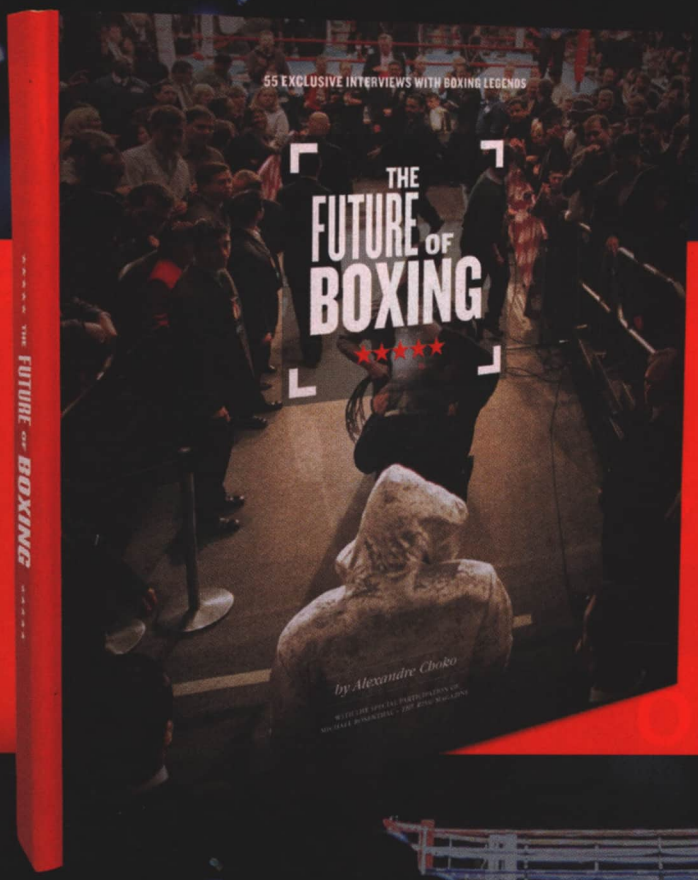

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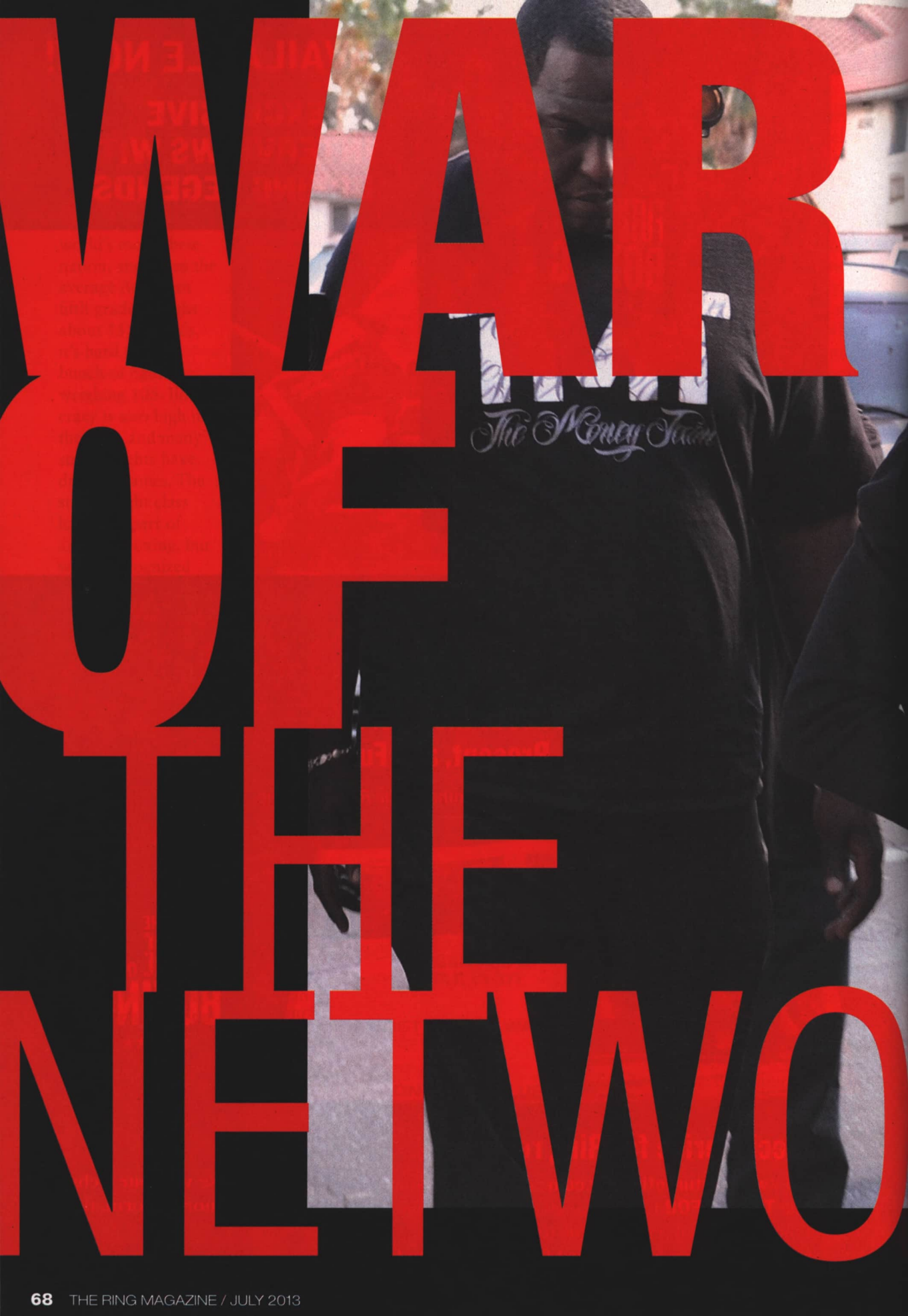
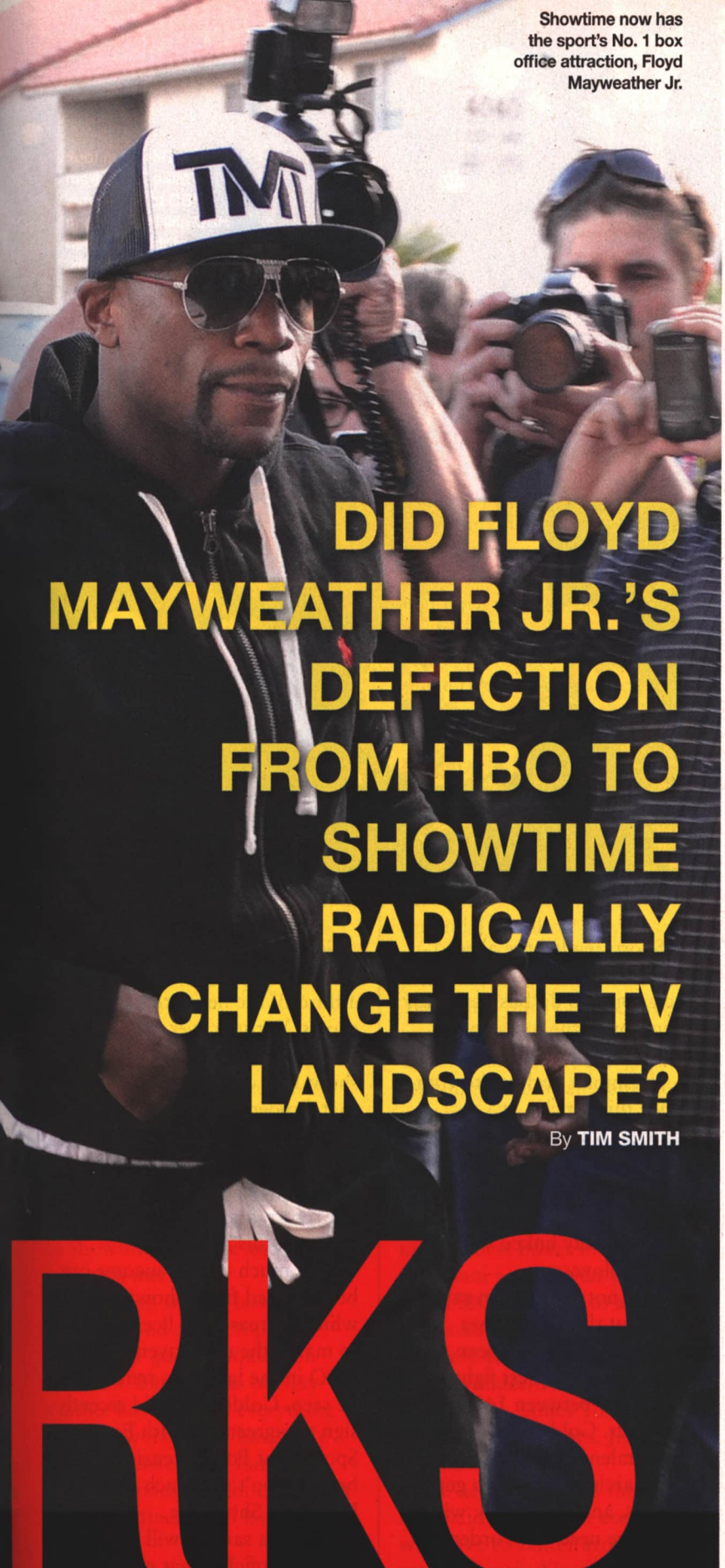




Showtime now has the sport's No. 1 box office attraction, Floyd Mayweather Jr.

DID FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.'S DEFECTION FROM HBO TO SHOWTIME RADICALLY CHANGE THE TV LANDSCAPE?

By **TIM SMITH**

RKS

When Showtime signed Floyd Mayweather Jr. to a six-fight, multimillion-dollar deal in February, snatching the best boxer in the sport away from rival network HBO, it meant very little to the boxing fans and casual observers of the sport. Mayweather was changing networks. He wasn't retiring. And HBO wasn't shuttering the doors to its boxing broadcast division.

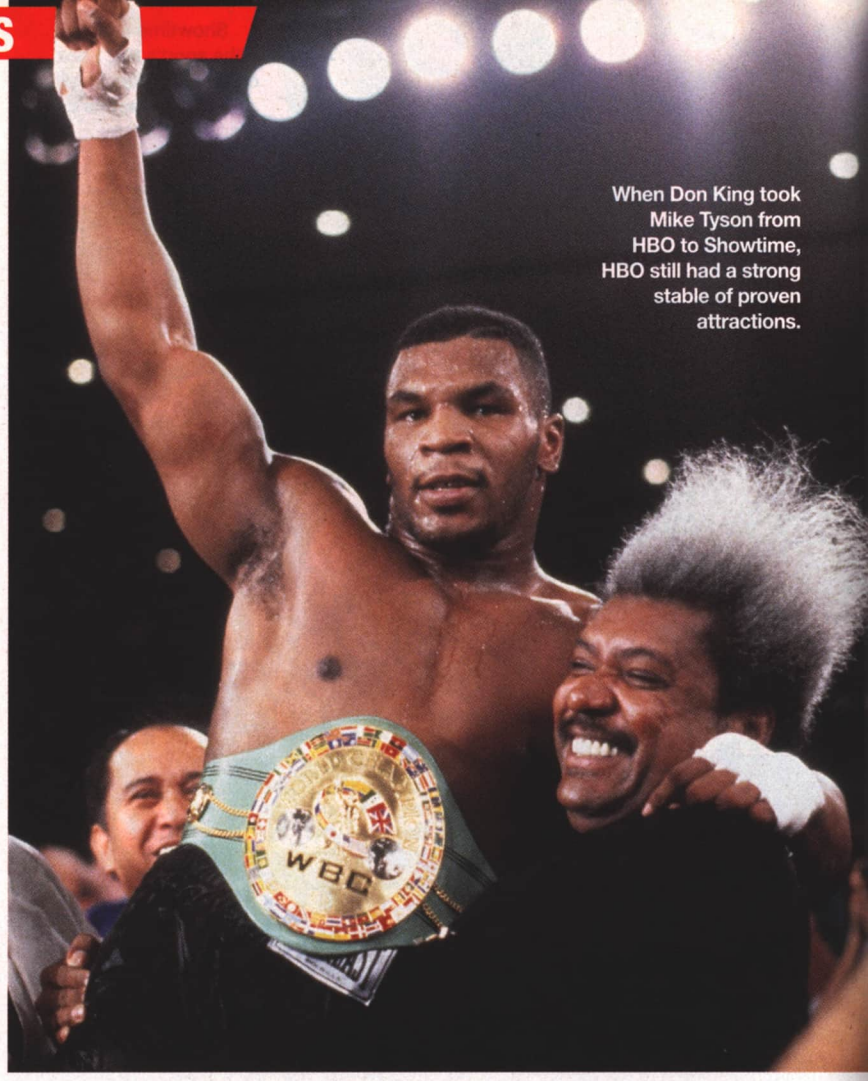
However, those inside the sport saw more. They felt the seismic shift in the way that business would be conducted at both networks and saw how it might affect the types of matches that fans see.

By signing Mayweather, boxing's No. 1 box office attraction, Showtime signaled that it intends to be a major player in the same league as HBO. For HBO, it meant that it had lost the anchor of its lucrative pay-per-view division and would now have to change its approach to the boxing business.

When the rumbling stops, will one network emerge as the primary destination for big-time boxing? Or will it be a give-and-take battle? And how will all this impact fans?

It will take months before anyone knows the answers to those questions, but the changes have energized the executives at both networks and a game of chess is now going on to see who can make the best matches.

The door for big-time boxing at Showtime cracked open when Bob Arum, CEO of Top Rank Promotions, took Manny Pacquiao from HBO to Showtime for a pay-per-view fight against Shane Mosley in 2011. Even though it was just a one-fight deal so a disgruntled Arum could thumb his nose at HBO and Ross Greenburg, who was then President of HBO



When Don King took Mike Tyson from HBO to Showtime, HBO still had a strong stable of proven attractions.

Sports, the move whet the appetites of executives at CBS – Showtime's parent company – for high profile boxing under the network's umbrella.

When Mayweather and his representatives began negotiating for his first fight in 2013, Showtime officials jumped into the fray. They made Mayweather an offer he couldn't refuse and HBO refused to match. It was hailed as a coup for Showtime and CBS.

"Our boxing content has increased, and the number of fights that we have on Showtime has tripled in the last year," said Stephen Espinoza, Showtime's general manager of sports programming.

"Our 2012 boxing ratings increased 30 percent over 2011. We've doubled down on boxing. We've been able to allocate more resources to boxing and our strategy has paid off."

One of the first things HBO officials did following the loss of Mayweather was to announce that they were no longer buying fights from Golden Boy Promotions, one of the biggest boxing promoters in the United States. Insiders at HBO say the fallout with Golden Boy, which co-promotes Mayweather's fights, wasn't directly linked to Mayweather accepting a deal that could be worth up to $200 million if he fights six times under the contract. Rather, HBO executives had become increasingly angry with Golden Boy over the tone of negotiations for matches involving their other boxers.

"It all began last year when they took Danny Garcia, Amir Khan and Canelo Alvarez over to Showtime," a source close to the situation said. "HBO had done their first fights and the negotiations for their return fights were just awful. All the negotiations started with the threat to take the fighters to Showtime."

Ken Hershman, president of HBO Sports, ended the alleged threats by announcing that they weren't going to do business with Golden Boy in the foreseeable future. Through an HBO spokesman, Hershman declined to comment for this article.

Espinoza, who was once the attorney for Oscar De La Hoya, the founder of Golden Boy Promotions, has drawn criticism for being too closely linked with his former employer.

"There's not much I can say or do about that," Espinoza said. "Our strategy has been to concentrate on the best fights we can make between 140 and 154 pounds. Golden Boy has the depth of talent in those divisions. Our overarching goal is to get the best fights, and we'll work with whoever we need to in order to do that."

Golden Boy did seven matches on HBO last year, which is about a third of the network's boxing shows. With an average of about $1.5 million in licensing fees per show, that comes to $10.5 million that Golden Boy would lose. That is a hefty amount to the bottom line of any company. Richard Schaefer, CEO of Golden Boy, did not return a message seeking comment for this article.

How much of that income can be recouped from Showtime, which increased its licensing fees to match the ones given out by HBO in the last year, remains to be seen. Golden Boy did recently sign an agreement with Fox Sports, but Fox's licensing fees for boxing don't approach those of HBO and Showtime.

Espinoza said he will continue to buy the fights that make sense

for Showtime.

"I'm responsible for the business at Showtime, and Golden Boy is responsible for their business. I'm not in the business of guaranteeing promoters a certain number of shows," Espinoza said.

There may be a greater pool of top fighters to choose from, though. HBO's decision to stop doing business with Golden Boy apparently meant that fighters like Adrien Broner, Bernard Hopkins, Garcia, Khan and Alvarez were no longer welcome on the network. But Garcia, Khan and Alvarez have already become centerpieces of Showtime's boxing schedule, and common sense says that the network is prepared to absorb more of the Golden Boy fights that will no longer be on HBO.

Showtime also has the backing of CBS, which threw its considerable marketing muscle behind the Mayweather-Robert Guerrero pay-per-view show. Yet to be determined is whether CBS will throw the same kind of marketing support behind Alvarez, Garcia, Khan and others in an effort to turn them into future pay-per-view attractions.

Espinoza said the CBS marketing opportunities are available, but it will be done on a case-by-case basis. He added that he is not necessarily interested in developing the next superstar pay-per-view attraction. Mayweather is a standalone star and other boxers on Showtime will rise and fall on their own merit.

Developing stars is how HBO built its brand as the top destination for quality boxing on television. But the loss of Mayweather has changed everything at the network. They have only one boxer inked to a long term contract, middleweight champion Sergio Martinez, who has a three-fight deal.

Pacquiao is the lone HBO pay-per-view attraction. But Pacquiao has lost his last two fights, including a devastating KO by Juan Manuel Marquez last December, and isn't expected back in the ring until fall or winter. The dry period could present a problem, since the network is accustomed to building around its pay-per-view stars.

"HBO can't do business the way they were doing business," said Seth Abraham, former president of HBO Sports. "They lost the best two boxers in the sport – Floyd and Mayweather. There is no one else in second place now. When you lose the best fighter, you have to go back to the drawing board and construct a new game (plan)."

The two pay-cable networks are closer in status now than they were when Abraham ran the shop at HBO. HBO has 28 million subscribers. Thanks to the success of some original programs such as *Dexter* and *Homeland*, Showtime has increased its subscribers to 22 million from around 13 million 10 years ago.

It was on Abraham's watch that promoter Don King took Mike Tyson and Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. over to Showtime, where King set up that network's boxing programming. Abraham said the departure of Tyson is much different from Mayweather leaving HBO.

"When Don packed up Tyson and left, Tyson was the most popular boxer in the world, but not the best boxer in the world," Abraham said. "Even without Tyson, HBO was able to assemble the boxing version of the 1927 Yankees and Murderer's Row. We had (Evander) Holyfield, (Riddick) Bowe, James Toney, Pernell Whitaker, Roy Jones, Jr. and Lennox Lewis."

The new game plan that Abraham said HBO must construct will have to center around boxers like Sergio Martinez, Andre Ward, Nonito Donaire, Timothy Bradley, Brandon Rios, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. and Gennady Golovkin.

In an odd twist, HBO appears to be ripping a page from Showtime's playbook from 10 years ago when the network went to a policy of not signing boxers to long term contracts. The thinking was that it gave the executives more freedom when negotiating with promoters to make good fights rather than slogging through a series of bad matches before getting to what everyone really wants to see. Showtime even developed a slogan for the policy: "Great fights. No rights."

Thomas Hauser, an author who was once one of the harshest critics of HBO's boxing programming department and is now a consultant with HBO, is eager to see how things play out. He isn't in favor of HBO's decision to freeze out Golden Boy Promotions.

"I think what's going on now is counter to the best interest of boxing, because all networks should be doing business with all promoters on a level playing field," said Hauser. "That applies to HBO, Showtime and every other network. Exclusivity on a network leads to problems because the network by definition is giving away its most valuable bargaining chip, which are the dates themselves."

Abraham emphasized, however, that the boxing business is always fluid and fortunes can change quickly.

"At some point Floyd is going to retire, lose or lose interest," Abraham said. "This is not a permanent state. Showtime made a big move on the chessboard. They moved the king and the queen. But it's not checkmate. Now what do they do with the other pieces, and what does HBO do as an alternative plan?"

Hall of Famer Virgil Hill, who is part Native American, had 20 successful defenses over two reigns as light heavyweight champ.

Theo Klein/Getty Images; Inset: Holly Stein/Staff

TOP OF THE HILL

VIRGIL HILL CAME A LONG WAY FROM NORTH DAKOTA TO THE INTERNATIONAL BOXING HALL OF FAME

By **Ron Borges**

Virgil Hill never shared his father's dream for him even though on June 9 he will fulfill it.

On that Sunday afternoon, the 49-year-old three-time light heavyweight champion and former cruiserweight titleholder will have his hand raised one last time when he is inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. If there has been a more unlikely road to fistic immortality than the one he walked from Grand Forks, N.D., to Canastota, N.Y., it is difficult for Hill to fathom ... and was impossible for him to have ever dreamed.

"I never thought about the Hall of Fame," Hill said recently from his home in Canyon Country, Calif., where he now conditions athletes and is plotting a unique one-fight "comeback," which we'll get to in a minute.

"It was a big thing to my father but it was never my thought. Everything else was my thought:

training hard, winning fights, going to the Olympics, winning a world title, defending it. The Hall of Fame seems unreal when you're out there fighting. When they called, I was very, very surprised."

Considering Hill's record of accomplishments, his astonishment that a place was made for him on boxing's Mt. Olympus is, well, astonishing. Hill not only twice won the WBA light heavyweight title but successfully defended it a record 20 times over two reigns, added the IBF 175-pound title and later won the WBA cruiserweight belt. He also went on to capture what the WBA calls its "regular" cruiserweight title before losing it on points to Firat Arslan in Germany on Nov. 24, 2007, in what was believed to be his final fight. Final, that is, until Hill got an idea after his son, Virgil Jr., suddenly announced a year ago he wanted to fight professionally himself.

The younger Hill, a former St. Louis Cardinals prospect who was released after four minor league seasons, told his shocked father that, at 23, he wanted to join the family business. Like most fighters, Hill opposed the idea but realized he could no more stop his son from fighting than all the naysayers back in North Dakota could stop him when he first entered a gym in Grand Forks at the age of eight to begin 41 years of proving doubters wrong.

So Hill now works with Virgil Jr., who, although he spent much of his life around boxing, has never had an amateur fight. The father is preparing the son for his moment, a moment he hopes will happen in the same place where he had so many of his own.

"I do NOT want my son to fight but if he's going to, I'll be involved," Hill said. "He had offers from the Brewers and the Reds to go back to baseball but he says he's done. I've told him he shouldn't do it. I've told him boxing is an unforgiving sport. If you can play baseball or box, play baseball.

"But he's 23 and says he always wanted to do it, so I'm planning a goodbye fight back in North Dakota, a 'thank you' to all the people who helped me. My son would turn pro the same night.

"I want Freddie (Roach, who trained Hill to his first world title) in my corner for the last one. It would be like coming full circle. Tell Bernard (Hopkins, who became the oldest man ever to win a world championship when he beat Tavoris Cloud in March at the age of 48) if he would like to join me in that ring I'd appreciate it."

That, Hill knows, is unlikely but probably not as unlikely as his emergence from North Dakota to become first an Olympic silver medalist and then a world champion who dominated his division for a decade between 1987 and 1997.

"We moved from a farm into Grand Forks, which was the big city to me," Hill said, "maybe 42,000 people. I saw a Golden Gloves tournament on television and wanted to do that, so my dad took me to a little gym in town and I liked it. I was 8 years old.

"I lost my first fight but eventually I went 288-11 as an amateur and made the 1984 Olympic team. When I went to the Olympic Trials I was a true amateur. I was 20 and I'd never really had sparring. I didn't even know how to wrap my hands until I got to the Olympic Training Center. I'd just put my hands inside the gloves.

"I lost the gold medal fight to a Korean (Shin Joon-Sup). I actually won 3-2 but they had a jury in those days and they went to them and overturned the result, 4-1. That was the politics of boxing. The Koreans were threatening to pull out of the Olympics. We'd beaten three of

VIRGIL HILL FILE

The accomplishments of the former Olympian and four-time world titleholder, who heads the International Boxing Hall of Fame's Class of 2013.

1984 – Won the middleweight silver medal in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles.

1987 – KO'd Leslie Stewart in four rounds to win the WBA 175-pound title, his first. Made 10 successful defenses before losing it to Thomas Hearns in 1991.

1992 – Outpointed Frank Tate to regain the WBA title. Made 10 more defenses before losing it to Dariusz Michalczewski in 1997.

1996 – Defeated Henry Maske by split decision in Germany to unify the WBA and IBF titles. It was Maske's only loss.

2000 – Thought by some to be in decline but moved up to cruiserweight and stopped Fabrice Tiozzo in one round to win the WBA 190-pound title. He lost it to Jean Marc Mormeck in his next fight.

2006 – Bounced back again at 41 by easily outpointing Valery Brudov to win what the WBA calls its "regular" cruiserweight belt. Firat Arslan took the belt in Hill's final fight.

2012 – Was talking about making a comeback as he approaches 50.

Holly Stein/Staff/Getty Images

Hill was trainer Freddie Roach's first world champion.

their fighters already. I had to fight the last Korean.

"Just before the fight my dad told me to give it my best because nobody remembers second place. I was so mad at him at the time. I didn't understand what he was saying until later but he was right. They don't remember second place.

"After that fight I had no idea the natural progression was to the pros. I figured I'd go back in four years and beat the guy who beat me. That's how naive we were in North Dakota. Nobody turned pro. We didn't even have a commission."

But with a silver medal around his neck Hill's life was changing. Interest was high in the 1984 U.S. boxing team that had dominated the Los Angeles Games, winning nine gold medals. It was led by Mark Breland, Meldrick Taylor, Pernell Whitaker, Tyrell Biggs, Hill's future nemesis Frank Tate, Paul Gonzalez and a bronze medalist named Evander Holyfield. Rising New Jersey promoter Dan Duva signed Breland, Taylor, Whitaker, Biggs, Holyfield and Hill and embarked on a plan to make them champions with the help of ABC.

But Duva quickly fell into disfavor with legendary trainer Eddie Futch, who was working with Hill and his long-time manager Bill Sorensen. They seldom agreed on opponents and Hill's desire to fight in North Dakota added to Duva's promotional difficulties. Finally, in deference to Futch, Duva made what would be one of his few errors in boxing judgment.

"We had Virgil his first seven fights," said Duva's wife Kathy, who now runs Main Events. "There was pressure from ABC, which paid a lot of money for these guys to fight on their network. They wanted them in with guys who were a threat to them, but Eddie wanted to go slowly with Virgil.

"The others were more accomplished at the time, but Dan tried to convince Eddie that Virgil could beat better guys. Dan had so much respect for Eddie he didn't want to fight with him, so he let them go. Nobody expected it to turn out the way it did. Part of the success Virgil had was going home to North Dakota to fight. The whole thing happened for him there."

Suddenly Hill was without a top promoter, but he fought 10 times in 1986 and four more in 1987, pushing his record to 18-0 when he was given a shot at WBA champion Leslie Stewart, who was coming off a dominant thrashing of Marvin Johnson.

Stewart was 24-1 at the time, with 17 knockouts, a crushing puncher who entered the ring at Trump Plaza in Atlantic City, N.J., on Sept. 5, 1987, a 6-1 favorite. He left semi-conscious four rounds later, a champion no more, although winning was trickier than it appeared.

"Virgil got cut the last day of sparring," Roach recalled. "I remembered a trick Mr. Futch taught me about using makeup to cover up a cut. I got some from a girl at the front desk and nobody even knew he was cut.

"Virgil was 100 percent prepared. He was a converted southpaw with a great left hand. That was his best weapon. He knocked out Stewart with a hook over the right hand, and I had my first world champion. Never

forget that."

Neither will Hill, who entered the ring that night driven by all the naysayers back in North Dakota and throughout boxing who told him more times than he could recall that he would never succeed because who from North Dakota ever had?

"If I'd believed everything everybody told me, I'd still be in North Dakota doing God-knows-what," Hill said. "I felt like I was always behind the eight ball because of where I came from. I'm partly Native American, and I saw a lot of kids in North Dakota who were good athletes but some where they fell off. I'm proof that if you dream and you believe, you can achieve.

"I never fought a fight I didn't think I could win. Maybe Stewart underestimated me. I knew I was ready. I had a lot of speed and I caught him and they raised my hand."

That would happen in 10 straight title defenses, including one against Bobby Czyz in Bismarck, N.D., that displayed Hill's work ethic and the difficulty of keeping it in check.

"A day before the fight I couldn't find him," Roach said. "I drove out to where we ran and there he was, about 20 miles from the hotel. I said, 'What are you doing!' He said, 'Can I run home?' I said, 'Get in the car.'"

Hill would easily outpoint Czyz in front of a packed house. That was always the case in Bismarck, where he fought nine times during his first reign before losing a decision and his title to Thomas Hearns in Las Vegas in 1991.

"Looking back I did some pretty crazy things," Hill said. "I did things in training I thought my opponent wouldn't. I always tried to push myself. That was my advantage. Losing for me wasn't an option because of where I came from."

After the Hearns defeat, Hill felt lost. He left Roach, moved to Australia to train with Jeff Fenech and learned new ways in a culture far removed from his comfort zone. But it was more than new training methods he sought. It was a much-needed escape.

"My life was getting out of control a little bit," Hill said. "I needed to regroup. Australia was a different kind of training. It was rough. You didn't have all the

CLASS OF 2013

Those who will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame this year.

MODERN

ARTURO GATTI
Record: 40-9 (31 KOs)
Active: 1991-2007
Summary: The two-time titleholder was one of the most beloved boxers of his era because of his fighting spirit. He was in four RING Magazine Fights of the Year.

VIRGIL HILL
Record: 50-7 (23 KOs)
Active: 1984-2007
Summary: The light heavyweight and cruiserweight held a major title in 16 of 21 years from 1987 to 2007, including 10 consecutive years between 1987 and 1997.

MYUNG-WOO YUH
Record: 38-1 (14 KOs)
Active: 1982-93
Summary: The two-time junior flyweight titleholder from South Korea had a division-record 17 successful defenses in his dominating first reign, which lasted six years.

OLD-TIMER

JEFF SMITH
Record: 88-12-3 (48 KOs)
Active: 1910-27
Summary: The clever middleweight never won a world championship but beat a number of all-time greats and, known as the "Bayonne Globetrotter," would fight anyone, anywhere.

WESLEY RAMEY
Record: 140-28-12 (11 KOs)
Active: 1929-41
Summary: The "Uncrowned Lightweight Champion" never fought for a world title but defeated a number of world champions, including all-time great Tony Canzoneri.

NON-PARTICIPANT

MILLS LANE
Summary: Lane was perhaps the most respected referee of his time because of his no-nonsense mentality, sound judgment and integrity.

JIMMY LENNON JR.
Summary: The golden-voiced ring announcer is arguably the best in the business. He followed in the formidable footsteps of his father, announcer Jimmy Lennon Sr.

ARTURO "CUYO" HERNANDEZ
Summary: One of the most respected Mexican managers, handled the likes of Carlos Zarate, Ricardo Lopez, Ruben Olivares and Alexis Arguello, among many others.

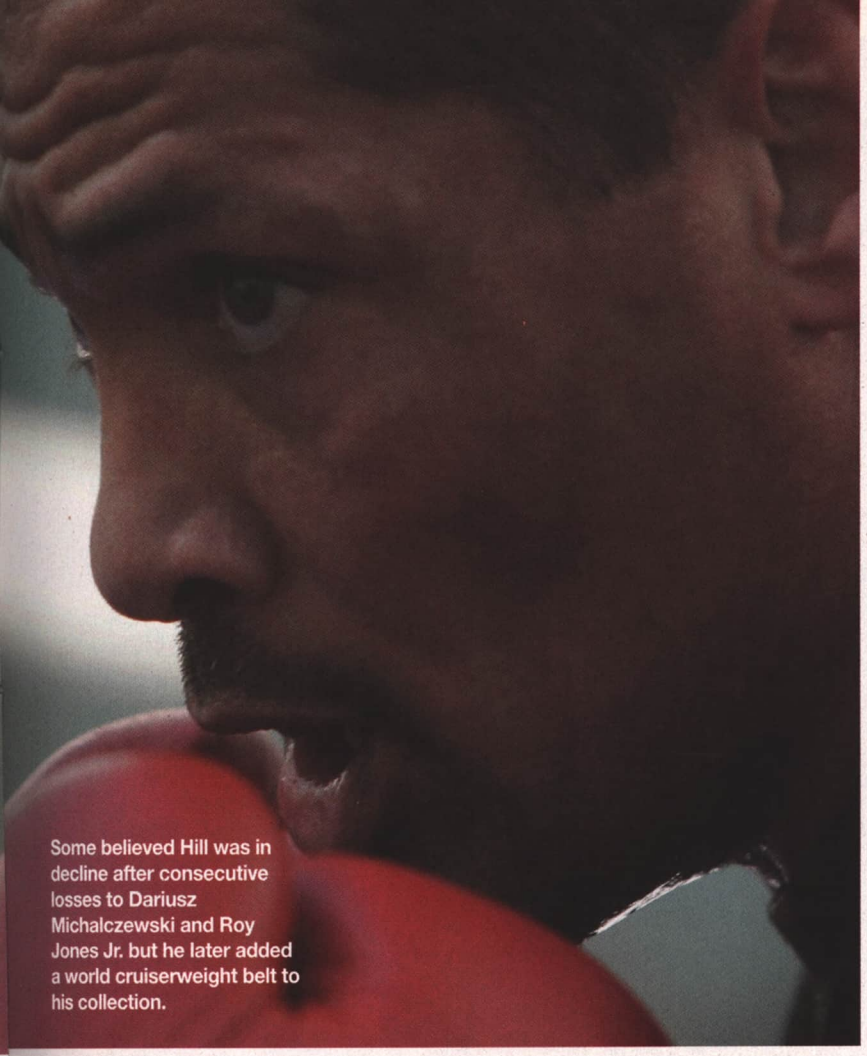
OBSERVER

COLIN HART
Summary: The Londoner earned the reputation as one of the top boxing writers in the world over a journalism career that lasted a half century.

TED CARROLL
Summary: The prolific artist's classic cartoons graced the pages of THE RING Magazine and other publications for many years.

PIONEER

JOE COBURN
Summary: The Irish-born New Yorker was one of the top bare-knuckle fighters in the mid-19th century. He reportedly never lost a fight.



Some believed Hill was in decline after consecutive losses to Dariusz Michalczewski and Roy Jones Jr. but he later added a world cruiserweight belt to his collection.

amenities you had in the States and it was tough doing business from Australia. So after a year and one fight I came home."

Two fights later he found himself facing his former Olympic teammate and rival, Frank Tate. It was eight years since they'd medaled in Los Angeles and now they were facing each other for the vacant WBA title back in Bismarck.

Hill won easily and went on another march of 10 successful defenses, including a rematch with Tate, a split decision over Fabrice Tiozzo in France and an odd night with Adolfo Washington at the Fargodome in Fargo, N.D., in which Hill retained his title when the fight had to be stopped in Round 11 after Washington suffered a deep cut from bumping his head into a TV camera.

In addition to winning seven times in North Dakota during his second reign, Hill won in London and just outside Paris, and upset previously undefeated German legend Henry Maske, the IBF champion, in Munich in 1996. Before that fight Maske, a national hero, had announced his retirement so emotions were roiling around Olympiahalle, but Hill still won a hard-earned split decision that unified the titles and haunted Maske for more than 10 years. Seven months later Hill would return to Germany with less glorious results.

He was there to face undefeated WBO champion Dariusz Michalczewski in another unification fight but lost a decision that ended his time as a force in the light heavyweight division. After a layoff of nearly a year, he returned only to be stopped by a crushing body shot from Roy Jones Jr. that broke a rib and convinced him to move to cruiserweight.

"Roy won Punch of the Year for that," Hill joked. "Roy was not a body puncher so I'd say it was a fluke, that right hand to the body, but he did it. If I could have done it to him, I would have."

At that point Hill was 36 and many felt over the hill, but don't ever say that to Tiozzo, who was 42-1 when he faced Hill in a rematch on Dec. 9, 2000, nearly two years after Hill's loss to Jones. Again the fight was in France and Hill stopped Tiozzo in one round, dropping him three times to win the WBA cruiserweight title, a belt he would lose 14 months later to Jean-Marc Mormeck.

Hill lost a hotly disputed rematch with Mormeck two years later in South Africa but won the "regular" title in his final victory, easily outpointing undefeated Russian Valery Brudov before another 14-month layoff preceded a big-money rematch with Maske on March 31, 2007.

Maske had trained for more than a year to avenge his only defeat. It was an obsession more than a fight on a night when all of Germany stopped to watch its boxing hero's return. For Hill, it was the kind of payday that couldn't be ignored, no matter the cost.

"I hurt my knee before the fight but knew I had a rematch clause and I knew the money I was being paid, so I had to fight," Hill said. "Right after it I had surgery in Germany. I already knew he wasn't looking for a rematch. I tried to ruffle his feathers. He wasn't interested."

Now 43 and no longer the fighter he once was, Hill fought once more, losing the cruiserweight title to Arslan in Germany before walking away with a 50-7 record, world championships in two weight classes and a career

Johannes Simon/Bongarts/Getty Images

that would make him not only the biggest name in boxing in North Dakota, but on June 9 a name that will be etched in the place of his father's dreams.

"People ask me why I fought so often in North Dakota," said Hill, who fought there 26 times. "It was important to me to bring some recognition back to North Dakota. They had no professional sports then. The major sports franchise was me. Now my hope is to help kids there, especially Native American kids, have a dream of their own.

"For many years I got a black eye for fighting in North Dakota so often, but I have no regrets about what I did in boxing. I wouldn't change anything that happened or how it happened. If I did, I might not have made it to the Hall of Fame." RING

MORE HALL OF FAME COVERAGE ON RINGTV.COM

GATTI HAD 'IT'
Scan this QR code or go to http://bit.ly/16S0yeT to read about the popular Arturo Gatti, a member of the International Boxing Hall of Fame's Class of 2013.

FAMILY BUSINESS
Silky-voiced announcer Jimmy Lennon Jr., a 2013 Hall of Fame inductee, followed his famous father into the ring. To read about him, go to http://bit.ly/11KAHBt.

ICONIC REF
Mills Lane will be remembered as one of the best referees of his era. To read about him, go to http://bit.ly/ZTLSEW.

VIRGIL HILL

By **Anson Wainwright**

Virgil Hill doesn't have the name recognition of some of his teammates on the 1984 U.S. Olympic squad but his accomplishments speak loudly enough.

Hill won a silver medal in the middleweight division at the Los Angeles Games and finished his amateur career with a reported record of 288-11. Then, as a pro, he won four major titles in the light heavyweight and cruiserweight divisions over more than two decades.

"Quicksilver" held at least one 175-pound title continuously for all but one year over a 10-year period, ending in 1997. During that time, he made 20 successful defenses against some of the best light heavyweights in the world.

Hill stopped Leslie Stewart in four rounds to win the WBA title in 1987 and successfully defended 10 times before losing to Thomas Hearns, his first loss. He outpointed Frank Tate to regain the vacant WBA belt and made 10 more successful defenses before losing to Dariusz Michalczewski. Hill also added the IBF title when he outpointed then-unbeaten Henry Maske in 1997 in Maske's home country of Germany.

Some believed Hill was finished after he lost consecutive fights to Michalczewski and Roy Jones Jr. in the late 1990s but, after moving up to cruiserweight, he twice won the WBA title in that weight class.

Only two men, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. and Bernard Hopkins, have had more title fights than Hill.

Hill (50-7, 23 knockouts) retired in 2007 and now works as a conditioning coach. He will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame on June 9 in Canastota, N.Y.

BEST OVERALL
Roy Jones Jr.
He was very quick with his hands; he had a lot of intangibles. He was quick, he punched hard, he had good movement, good head movement. He was never shaken by anything. If I hit him with a good shot, you could never tell; he didn't show it. Some guys might blink or wobble.

BEST BOXER
Thomas Hearns
I think pure boxer, probably Tommy Hearns. Tommy was an incredible fighter. Even at the time that I fought him he was fairly accomplished. The difference was I hadn't fought a legend. I had fought 10 title defenses but none of them were legends and that's a whole other thing, a whole different level of fighting and just hoopla and everything. It was in Caesars Palace (in Las Vegas); it was a really big fight.

BEST JAB
Thomas Hearns
I guess I'd have to give that to Tommy as well. Just long arms and a really good jab. For as old as he was [32], his jab was still quick and hard. I had my nose broken three weeks prior to the fight and I think he hit me with a jab right off the bat and broke it again, so that's what sticks in my mind.

BEST DEFENSE
Jean-Marc Mormeck
Jean-Marc Mormeck had pretty good defense. Even though he was an aggressive guy, he still blocked a lot of shots.

BEST CHIN
Jean-Marc Mormeck
I would give that to Jean-Marc Mormeck as well. I cracked him with a shot the first time we fought, and I thought I hurt him, and I jumped on him, and he wasn't hurt.

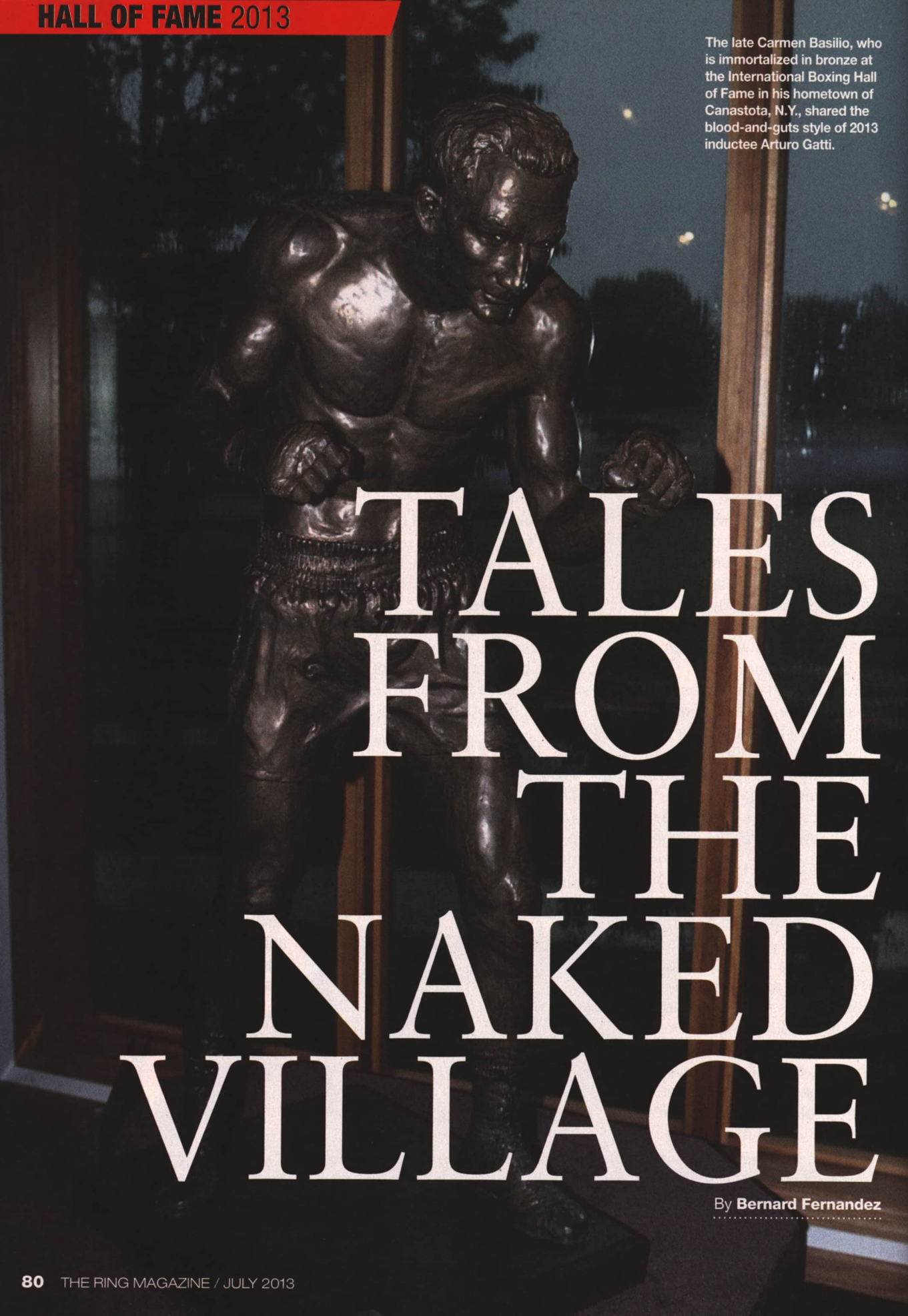
BEST PUNCHER
Roy Jones Jr.
I'd have to give that to Roy because Roy broke my rib. I just didn't see the shot, but nevertheless I've never been hit that hard before.

FASTEST HANDS
Roy Jones Jr.
That would go to Roy as well. Had he not caught me with a right hook to my body, though, it would have been a different fight. I adjusted to his speed.

FASTEST FEET
I don't know. A lot of guys, because I was a counter-puncher, came to me and were chasing me. Nobody really comes to mind. Roy wasn't that fleet of foot. He would come in and out; he had a wide base. But nobody that I can recall.

SMARTEST
Roy Jones Jr.
I'd give that to Roy again, just for the simple fact that I never thought that he would throw a body shot because he never threw body shots. When I watched the film, his trainer said "do this do that and sink one down to the body" and he did so. Him, or Tommy, as well.

STRONGEST
Joe Lasisi
The strongest guy I ever fought was a guy named Joe Lasisi. He was from Nigeria. Jo Jo was just a pure puncher, just strong. Jo Jo could knock you out with a right hand, one shot. I caught him before he got to me but I had sparred with him before and he buckled me with a right hand, so I knew what I was coming into.



The late Carmen Basilio, who is immortalized in bronze at the International Boxing Hall of Fame in his hometown of Canastota, N.Y., shared the blood-and-guts style of 2013 inductee Arturo Gatti.

TALES FROM THE NAKED VILLAGE

By **Bernard Fernandez**

There was a television cop show set in late 1950s New York called *The Naked City*, each episode ending with an unseen announcer telling the audience, "There are eight million stories in the Naked City. This has been one of them."

The picturesque central New York village of Canastota has considerably fewer residents than the population of the Big Apple's five boroughs, but, at least for four days each June, there are about as many stories told. The International Boxing Hall of Fame's annual induction gathering, which this year is June 6-9, features a smorgasbord of ring notables who are available to share with visitors spellbinding tales of fights fought, championships won and lost, and the unforgettable cast of characters that provide the sweet science its most flavorful ingredients.

The IBHOF, which opened in 1990 in the hometown of former welterweight and middleweight champion Carmen Basilio, as well as that of his nephew, former welterweight titlist Billy Backus, will always be a source of recollections of heroism and heartbreak inside the ropes. But several perennial returnees to what boxing promoter J Russell Peltz once called "boxing heaven" have since 2012 taken their eternal 10-count. Gifted raconteurs Bert Sugar and Angelo Dundee, both of whom passed away last year, were always among the more popular fan magnets, as was Basilio, who was 85 when he bade us farewell on Nov. 7. Their legacies live on, however, which is reason enough for the Hall to exist.

Two members of the Class of 2013 won't be able to explain what enshrinement means to them. Former world champion Arturo Gatti left us too soon in 2009, at 37, dying under mysterious circumstances in Brazil. Renowned referee Mills Lane's voice has all but been silenced by the effects of the debilitating stroke he suffered in the spring of 2002. But make no mistake, their tales will be fondly told nonetheless.

Here are just six stories from the new group of legends that will have their plaques hung in the Naked Village:

ARTURO GATTI

Not since now-deceased former heavyweight champion Ingemar Johansson was inducted in 2002 has there been as much debate about a fighter's qualifications for Hall of Fame membership as arose when it was announced that Gatti (40-9, 31 KOs) had been voted in during his first year of eligibility. Some would say, and did, that Gatti, although a two-division (junior lightweight and junior welterweight) world champion and a huge box-office draw at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, N.J., was not sufficiently accomplished to stand alongside the best of the best.

Those who saw something else in Gatti politely say "bunk." Gatti stirred something gladiatorial in our hearts and minds as he pushed himself to the limits of human endurance in classic slugfests with, among others, Wilson Rodriguez, Angel Manfredy, Gabriel Ruelas, Ivan Robinson and Micky Ward.

Former HBO Sports senior vice president Lou DiBella, who now heads his own promotional company, used to book Gatti's fights for the pay-cable giant. He later served as an adviser to two of Gatti's opponents, Ward and Leonard Dorin.

"I make no bones about my love for Arturo Gatti," DiBella said a few years ago, in the latter stages of Gatti's blood-and-guts career. "I think he's an icon of our sport. I think he's the best of the best. In my 20-plus years of televised boxing, he's the best TV fighter I've ever seen."

Gatti, born in Italy, raised in Montreal and a resident at various times of Jersey City and Hoboken, N.J., was no fancy-stepper. But he always adhered to the warrior's creed. There was as much beauty in Gatti's scarred visage as there was in Muhammad Ali's leading-man looks and balletic movements. Boxing is an improbable union of naked power and subtle artistry, of stark fear and unbridled courage, those contrasts splashing the entire tableau of human emotions upon a canvas of a different sort than the ones used by Monet and Picasso. And the color most prevalent is blood-red.

"I was told lots of times in the amateurs that I had more heart and determination than other fighters," Gatti once said. "I think I have talent. But to be a fighter, the intangibles are something you need more than anything to be successful. I wish all my fights were easy, but I know if it comes to that, I've got the heart, guts and determination to win the tough ones."

Asked if he thought he ever

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THE RING Magazine is featured in one of many exhibits at the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

would pass the Canastota sniff test, Gatti, somewhat prophetically, offered that "I think I've earned it. What I've done in my career, I think, merits a spot in the Hall of Fame."

★

VIRGIL HILL

At one point during a professional boxing career that ran from 1984 to 2007, Hill, a silver medalist for the United States in the 165-pound weight class at the '84 Los Angeles Olympics – hence his nickname of "Quicksilver" – moved to Las Vegas. But Hill (50-7, 23 KOs), a ruggedly handsome man of French, Canadian, Norwegian, German and Native American (Cherokee) ancestry, always seemed somewhat out of place amid the neon and glitz of Sin City. Nor did he seem a comfortable fit the two times he fought in New York City, the first of which was his pro debut on Nov. 15, 1984. That night he served as something as a warm-up act to his more celebrated U.S. teammates Evander Holyfield, Pernell Whitaker, Meldrick Taylor and Mark Breland during the HBO-televised "Night of the Olympians" at Madison Square Garden.

Born in Clinton, Mo., Hill moved to North Dakota at an early age and he always seemed most comfortable amid the rolling hills and plains of his adopted home state, the third least-populous and fourth least-densely populated in America. After he won the first of his world championships in different weight divisions (light heavyweight, and later cruiserweight), Hill made challengers come to him. Twenty-five of his 57 bouts (including 14 title defenses) came in such seemingly out-of-the-way North Dakota towns as Bismarck (15 appearances), Grand Forks (3), Minot (3), Fargo (2), Williston (1) and New Town (1).

"Virgil Hill is our franchise, our professional franchise," then-Bismarck mayor Bill Sorenson said before Hill retained his WBA 175-pound crown on a unanimous decision over Tyrone Frazier in 1990.

Of that fight, Abe Winter, the *Bismarck Tribune* sports editor from 1979 to '97 said: "Virgil is a world champion, so he's a star everywhere. It's just that, well, he's a bigger star here."

★

MYUNG-WOO YUH

It's a familiar question. If a tree falls in the forest and there's no one there to hear it, does it make a sound?

Depends on where the forest is. If it's in South Korea and the tree falling – or, more accurately, the axeman chopping down similarly sized timbers – is a 5-foot-4 junior flyweight champion named Myung-Woo Yuh (38-1, 14 KOs), whatever sound it makes doesn't reverberate very loudly on the other side of the world, in the United States.

Or at least it didn't, until now, with Yuh's well-deserved induction into the IBHOF. The tiny terror, who was 29 when he retired in 1993, is perhaps the most celebrated boxer ever in South Korea. And if he isn't, it doesn't take

THE RING MAGAZINE ©

long to call the roll. He ran off a division-record 17 winning title defenses in the first of his two reigns in the 108-pound weight class, adding another after losing and then regaining the title.

Although his knockout percentage isn't overly impressive, in some ways Yuh was a diminutive version of Arturo Gatti. He threw punches in bunches, and his epic, seventh-round stoppage of Oh-Kon Son in 1985 rates among the most exciting fights most Americans have never seen.

Interestingly, Yuh's best chance for widespread recognition in the U.S. could be the result of his recently announced business partnership with a fighter better known to American fight fans – Manny Pacquiao.

★

MILLS LANE

The grandson and son of one of Georgia's most prominent banking families, Mills Lane could have remained in that gilded cocoon had he followed a path that seemingly had been laid out for him. But Lane wanted to make it on his own terms, so he joined the Marines, where he took up boxing and became All-Far East welterweight champion and, after his enlistment was up, an NCAA boxing titlist as a student at the University of Nevada, Reno.

In the courtroom – where he was a feisty prosecutor and then a district judge in Washoe County, Nev. – Lane's style was as distinctive as it was during his 31 years as an elite referee. He was the third man in the ring for 102 world title bouts involving such fighters as Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard, Larry Holmes, Roberto Duran, Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield. Lane's raspy-voiced "Let's get it on!" catchphrase is as easily recognized by fight fans as ring announcer Michael Buffer's trademark "Let's get ready to ruuuumble."

But it was Lane's penchant for catching unique, historically significant assignments that separated him from other referees with similar resumes. He was on duty when James Miller, better known as "Fan Man," tried to land his paraglider in the ring at Caesars Palace during the seventh round of the second Holyfield-Riddick Bowe bout. Even more famously, or perhaps notoriously, he disqualified Tyson for his two chompings of Holyfield's right ear in the third round of their June 28, 1997, rematch.

"I'm forever wedded to that Tyson-Holyfield fight," said Lane, who became such a celebrity that he was made the star of his own TV show, *Judge Mills Lane*, on which he became the swiftest dispenser of Western justice since Roy Bean. "There's no question that bite put me where I am."

★

COLIN HART

It's been quite a run of late for the 78-year-old British newspaperman, who in 2012 received the Nat Fleischer Award for excellence in boxing journalism from the Boxing Writers Association of America, a sort of lead-in to his big day in Canastota.

"The ultimate honor," the Londoner with the moptop hairstyle, reminiscent of Paul McCartney circa 1964, said when told of his impending induction into the IBHOF in the observer category. "I just hope this isn't all a dream."

Hart has covered boxing with distinction for 48 years. His first assignment in the U.S. was Part One of the classic Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier trilogy, in Madison Square Garden, which lived up to its billing as "The Fight of the Century." Ali was Hart's favorite fighter then, and he remains so to this day.

"We could go another million years and we'd never have another like him," Hart said of Ali. "He was unique, the best heavyweight of all time. He just transcended the sport."

★

JIMMY LENNON JR.

Remember the scene in *w* where Rocky Balboa wins over a hostile Russian crowd with his gutty performance against a gigantic Russian opponent?

The same sort of thing happened to Showtime ring announcer Jimmy Lennon Jr., and he didn't have to eat punches for 15 rounds to turn boos into cheers. All it took was a few well-pronounced words in the audience's native language.

Lennon, who takes pride in his accurate pronouncement of fighters' names, no matter their nationality, recalls his June 16, 2007, assignment to announce the Oliver McCall-Sinan Samil Sam heavyweight bout in Ankara, Turkey.

"I took a red-eye flight and arrived at 5:30 on Saturday morning, the day of the fight," Lennon recalled. "I talked to a waiter who was setting up for breakfast and asked him how to say, 'Ladies and gentlemen, good evening and welcome, all my Turkish friends,' in Turkish.

"I recorded his response and wrote it down phonetically. When I was introduced that night as the American announcer for the main event, I was severely booed. I don't think Americans are welcomed at all times in Turkey. But as soon as I greeted the crowd in the Turkish language, they cheered me. I felt that I had won them over."

To say the fortunes of American amateurs have fallen since the 1984 Olympic team is a gross understatement. From left, standing: Meldrick Taylor, Mark Breland, Pernell Whitaker and Evander Holyfield. Tyrell Biggs is sitting.

'WE CAN BECOME A POWERHOUSE'

The new president of USA Boxing believes the Americans will rise again amid changes in amateur competition

By Bernard Fernandez

Goodbye, headgear. So long, for the most part, accursed computer. Welcome back, body shots and combination punches that actually count.

Call it the end of an error.

After 20-plus years of a downward spiral that pushed the sport to the brink of irrelevance, Olympic-style boxing is staging what might be its last, desperate stand. Some of the common-sense changes that have or soon will be instituted are long overdue. And the very ill, wheezing patient that the amateur boxing establishment in the United States and beyond has become will be monitored carefully during its quadrennial checkup at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

'WE CAN BECOME A POWERHOUSE'

Dr. Charles Butler, the Kalamazoo, Mich., physician who had been grudgingly restricted to administering Band-Aids to festering wounds, was elected president of USA Boxing in June 2012 and his pleas for a comprehensive overhaul have been heard not only on these shores but by the International Boxing Association. AIBA (the acronym remains the same although "amateur" has been dropped from the name) is moving to standardize the basics of the pugilistic arts across the board and even has quietly incorporated some elements of professional boxing into its structure. Maybe the way the pros do it isn't quite so evil as previously depicted by some in the U.S. and international boxing hierarchies.

That is encouraging news for amateur boxing on a global scale but especially for the U.S., which suffered a humiliating medal shutout at the 2012 London Olympics in the men's competition, although 17-year-old American Claressa Shields took gold in the inaugural Olympiad open to female boxers. It was the first time since the "modern" Olympics were launched in 1896 that this country – which leads all nations with 109 Olympic boxing medals (including 48 golds) – had totally laid so conspicuous an egg on the international stage.

"We can dominate the world again," said Dr. Butler, who is certain the revisions he successfully sought, and were also endorsed by AIBA president Dr. Wu Ching-Kuo of Taiwan, will have a major therapeutic effect on American amateur boxing from the grassroots to the elite levels. "We can become a powerhouse instead of a doormat."

America's painful retreat from the peak of Mount Olympus into its current dungeon can be traced to the 1988 Seoul Olym-

Roy Jones Jr. was the victim of perhaps the most memorable injustice in Olympic boxing history.

pics, when the biggest heist since the Brink's Job left the USA's Roy Jones Jr. with a silver medal instead of the gold he so richly deserved. In the 156-pound final, Jones dominated his South Korean opponent, Park Si-Hun, to such an extent that the announcement of the 3-2 "victory" for Park went far beyond the boundaries of the proverbial hometown or home-country decision.

Butler strongly suggests that there was more than anti-American bias or a desire to toss South Korea a bone on the host nation's soil that resulted in Jones being shafted. Rumors circulated then, as now, that some Olympic officials had put themselves up for sale. Although dubious decisions have pockmarked Olympic boxing for what seems like forever, what happened to Jones continues to stand as the worst-case example.

"When I got on the (AIBA) executive committee that year, I was part of a reform panel that Dr. Wu instituted after his election," Butler said. "We had a new slate of candidates and got rid of a lot of the guys who had been in there. It was something that needed to be done, because what had been going on was very obvious."

Perhaps the International Olympic Committee's mandate of a change from paper scoring to computer scoring in the wake of the outrage over the Jones debacle was honorable, or at least semi-honorable. Maybe it wasn't. In any case, the age of the computer was at hand and for a couple of generations of young U.S. boxers coming up through the pipeline, the effects were devastating.

The computerized equivalent of what had happened to Jones four years earlier took place during the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, when American Eric Griffin lost a 6-5 decision despite winning on the individual tabulations of the five judges seated at ringside as well as five backup judges. Ten out of 10 human beings saw one fighter winning a particular bout, but he still lost. Go figure.

Griffin's screwing might well have been the result of a requirement that, for a blow to be counted by the computer, three of the five ringside judges had to press a red or a blue button within one second of it landing. Too often, Butler said, judges with slow thumbs didn't press their button quickly enough or they actually pressed the wrong button by mistake.

"(The computer system) was put in to stop cheating," Butler said. "It didn't stop cheating. You could cheat with the computer as much or more as you could with it. But even if the judges were above reproach, the computer system was severely flawed. It was hard to score every scoring punch when four- and five-punch combinations were thrown. You'd be lucky to be credited with one point. You seldom got credit for body shots.

"If you as a boxer know you're not going to be credited for body shots or combinations, what are you going to do? Throw big, obvious punches to the head because that's all the judges could see. You take a kid who's a counterpuncher, he's probably going to lose because judges are too busy pressing the button to score the initial punch by the other guy. They weren't reacting quickly enough to register the counterpunch."

The mandatory use of the supposedly protective headgear, which is being scrapped along with computerized scoring, also drew withering criticism from Butler. As a medical doctor with impeccable credentials – he has held teaching positions at Harvard, the Mayo Clinic, the University of Alabama, University of Utah, LSU and Michigan

State, as well as serving as the chairman of AIBA's Medical Commission – he knows whence he speaks. Butler says the headgear that was made mandatory by AIBA in April 1984, and which has been used for the past eight Olympiads, has led to an increase in serious head injuries.

"There is no evidence protective headgear shows a reduction in incidence of concussion," he said. "In 1982, when the American Medical Association moved to ban boxing, everybody panicked and put headgear on boxers, but nobody ever looked to see what the headgear did. Headgear diffuses the impact of blows to the head, allowing boxers to sustain more head shots over a longer period of time. It also impedes their peripheral vision."

If Butler is correct, headgear increased concussions but reduced the incidence of knockouts, the most exciting and television-friendly aspect of boxing, which over time led to a less prominent place in Olympic television coverage. With TV exposure down and a dearth of Olympic heroes such as Sugar Ray Leonard, George Foreman and Oscar De La Hoya to pique interest, fewer and fewer kids took up boxing and the talent pool began to dry up.

Safety considerations aside, the end of computerized scoring is seen as beneficial to American boxers who are almost always introduced to the sport in their local gyms, and by coaches who were pros and inclined to teach what they knew. Boxing, in this country, is antithetical to what Olympic-style boxing has evolved into during the computer era. Not only that, but who really believes that a jab should count as much as a legitimate knockdown shot?

At the 2000 U.S. Olympic Boxing Team Trials in Tampa, Fla., 1976 gold medalist Leonard said he and others with his rapid-fire style would have been in dire straits had computer scoring been in effect when they represented their country.

"I don't know if I could make the Olympic team, much less win a gold medal, with the computer," Leonard said. "My thing was throwing combinations. Bap, bap, bap, bap, bap! The judges with the little keypads can't keep up. I could land five or six punches and be lucky to be credited with one point."

If Griffin is the poster child of malfeasance by computer, smaller but just-as-egregious outcomes left Olympic wannabes disenchanted to the point of near-rebellion. After brothers Nonito and Glenn Donaire believed they had been wronged in losing controversial computer decisions to Brian Viloria at the 2000 Olympic Trials, they, their father, their coach and a family friend staged a sit-down strike in the ring rather than proceed with Glenn's losers' bracket bout. Nonito, the Boxing Writers Association of America's 2012 Fighter of the Year, was so discouraged he said he even considered quitting boxing altogether.

"I was really down on the sport at that point," Nonito recalled in 2009. "My idea was to forget about boxing and to go to school. I actually did quit boxing for a year or so."

Fortunately, Donaire didn't stay

CHANGES IN AMATEUR BOXING

Old: Computerized scoring.
New: Pro-style 10-point must system.

Old: All five ringside judges score bouts, but for a blow to register as a point at least three must press a button within one second of it landing.
New: The scorecards of only three of the five judges, selected randomly by computer, will count.

Old: Every "scoring" blow counts equally.
New: Knockdowns and obviously harder punches carry greater weight in judges' scoring.

Old: Mandatory use of headgear.
New: Elite males will no longer wear headgear.

Old: Judges are selected for international events, including the Olympics, by a committee and with no regard for their nationality.
New: Every effort will be made to select only judges from neutral countries.

Old: Professionalism was strictly prohibited, although countries such as Cuba routinely sent de facto pros to the Olympics.
New: AIBA has instituted the World Series of Boxing, a sort of semi-pro league, to provide some level of financial assistance – training money, etc. – to leading amateurs. WSB boxers will be allotted a certain number of slots in the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, and they will be provided with health insurance and a pension plan.

Old: Age range for Olympic participation was 17 to 34.
New: Age range is 19 to 40.

— Bernard Fernandez

Former U.S. amateur Arthur Palac was so disgusted after losing a much-criticized decision to Jeff Lacy in the 2000 boxoffs that he quit boxing.

GETTY IMAGES

away forever. Such was not the case with Arthur Palac, a laser-accurate jabbing machine who was deemed the loser of a 2000 U.S. Olympic Box-off match he clearly deserved to win, given the scoring system that was in place, against Jeff Lacy. Palac was so miffed, in fact, he permanently hung up his gloves.

But scrubbing Olympic boxing's soiled image, and restoring more than the mere veneer of honesty and credibility, remains the No. 1 priority of Butler, Wu and their fellow reformers.

"Before the 2006 (AIBA) elections, the last Olympics that would have had boxing was London," Butler said. "The IOC (International Olympic Committee) was going to get rid of it because it was crooked. We had a lot of dishonest judges. We had to tell some countries that if they wanted to continue in Olympic boxing, they had to get new national governing bodies.

"If we catch any official cheating, we send him home. We send every official from that country home. We must achieve maximum fairness. Who wants to see something that's fixed?"

The computer is still there, in a fringe way. Although a pro-style 10-point-must system is now the way bouts will be scored, instead of judges scribbling on paper, according to Butler, "They still have to use the stupid computer to push a 10 or a nine."

More important, any judges inclined to accept bribes, those who haven't already been weeded out by the cleanup crew, can't be assured of influencing the outcome of a particular bout.

"All judges will be from neutral countries, if possible," Butler said. "To avoid the possibility of someone buying a judge, all five will take their stations randomly. Nobody will know beforehand what position a particular judge will be in. Once they're seated, a computer will randomly select three judges, so you wouldn't know who to buy in any case. All five judges will then score the bout, and think their scores are being counted, but actually only three of them will.

"And if the computer isn't working, all five judges will turn in their tabulations, but those cards will be put in a hat and just three of them will be pulled out and counted."

Butler said that, since he became president of USA Boxing, the number of participants has grown 5 percent. But for the U.S. to reclaim its former prominence, much more needs to be done.

"The world has caught up, and in some cases passed us," he said. "We were trying to coach to the scoring system, and that didn't work out so well, did it? Now we have a much fairer scoring system, but we're still not going to win unless we significantly raise the skill level of our boxers.

"What is it that Shakespeare said? 'The fault is not in the stars but in ourselves.' We had fallen way behind the times. Now we have to repair what's broken. I'm not sure how long it will take, but I believe it can happen. It will happen." RING

BRAINS MATTER

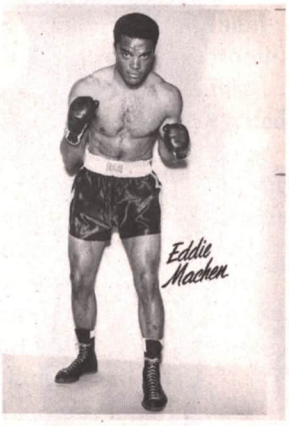
Those behind the Professional Fighters Brain Health Study want fighters like Timothy Bradley (left) and Ruslan Provodnikov, who engaged in an epic brawl in March, to be fully aware of the risks.

Brain health study seeks to educate boxers and improve safety in the sport

By **Gordon Marino**

Kevork Djansezian-Getty Images; Machen: THE RING

Not long ago, I caught a clip of the 1966 fight between Joe Frazier and Eddie Machen. At the time, the talented Machen was at the end of his boxing tether. He had exchanged heavy leather with everyone, including Floyd Patterson, Ingemar Johansson, Sonny Liston and Ernie Terrell. In 1962, and after threatening suicide, Machen had spent time in a psychiatric ward for severe depression. But four years later there he was in the squared circle with the young and supremely ferocious Smokin' Joe. For almost 10 rounds, Frazier pummeled Machen like the bag that used to hang off the tree in his Beaufort, S.C., yard. Of course, Machen was a tough and prideful pro who refused to surrender, so on the beating went, crushing left hook after left hook, round after round, until the referee finally put a stop to the slaughter.



Eddie Machen is just one example of a fighter whose brain took unnecessary punishment.

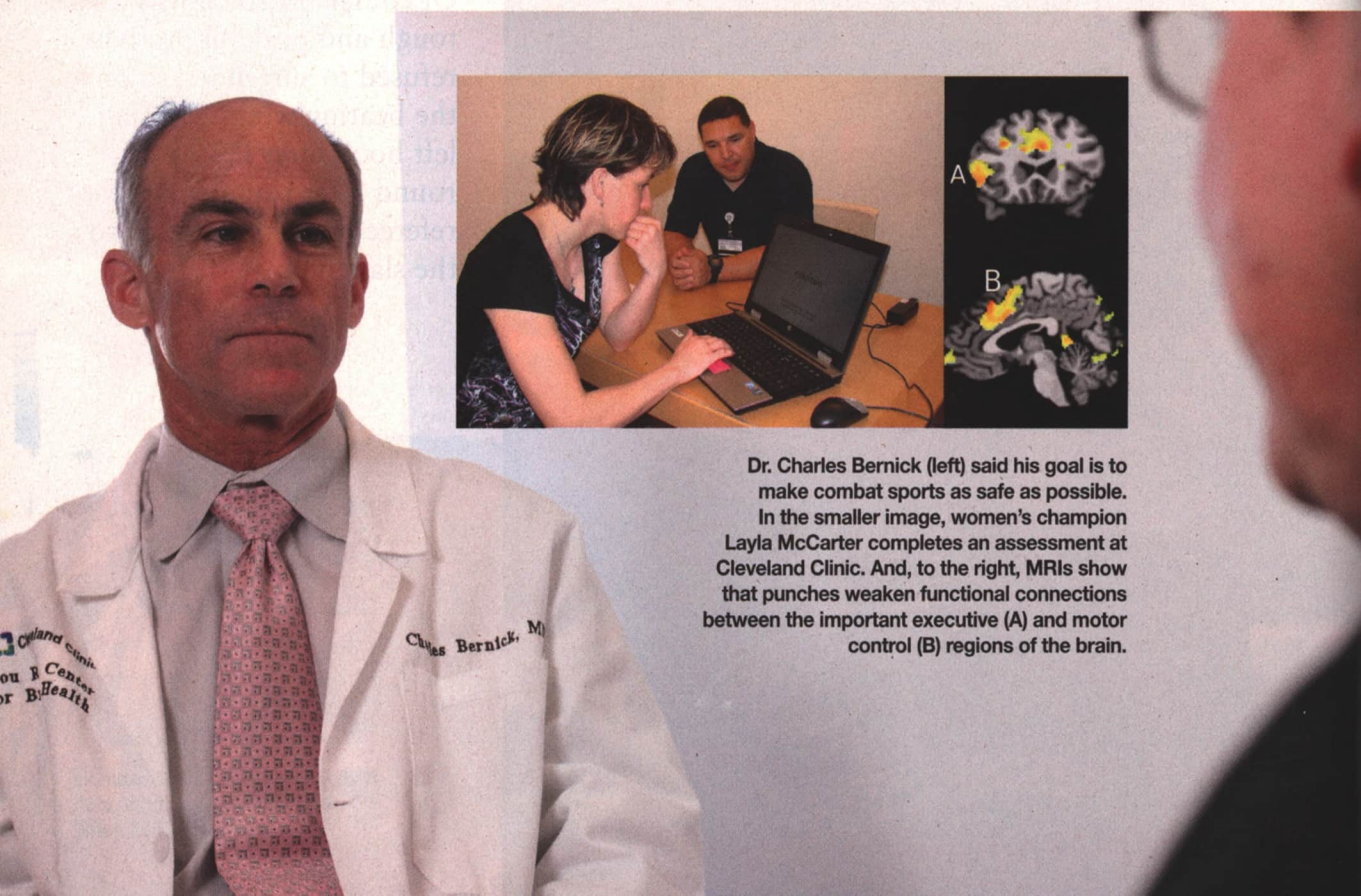
Nearly 50 years later, a true boxing fan would have to wonder what commission, what boxing manager would be so indifferent to Machen's health as to put him in the ring at this stage of his career with the juggernaut that was Joe Frazier? Machen died a few years later after falling out of his apartment window. Of course, today there are many new Eddie Machens, fighters who can't perform at the elite level anymore but who are in desperate need of a paycheck. They are boxers on the fast track to what used to be called "Palookaville."

Again and again, people who care about those who give and take punches for a living sigh that fighters need to be protected from themselves, from their own dauntless courage. It is true, but this earnest call for protection might extend further than halting the carnage of hopeless ring battles. It should also include putting up stop signs or at least caution flags when boxers are on the cusp of injuries that will impair them for life. But then, how are we to know when a fighter is on the edge of becoming a ghost of himself or herself? As early as the 1920s, the medical community recognized symptoms like slurred speech, tremors, and memory lapses as punch drunk or dementia pugilistica, but by the time these symptoms appear the red line has already been breached.

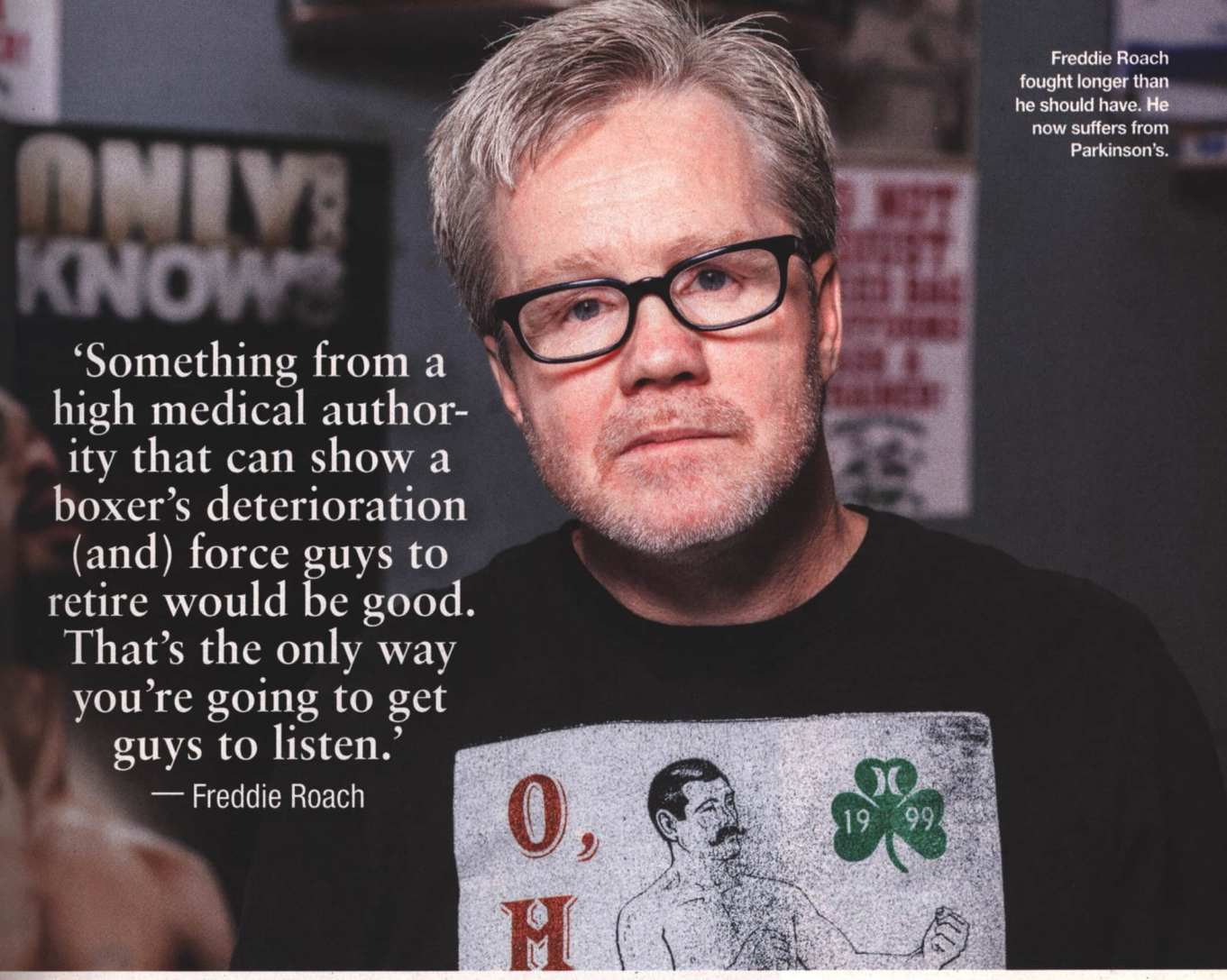
There is, however, encouraging news. Since 2011, the Professional Fighters Brain Health Study has been in progress and one of the central aims of this research is to discern the signs of the brain disease now known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy. The largest of its kind, the study is being run by the Cleveland Clinic's Lou Ruvo Center in Las Vegas. In addition to the sheer number of participants (currently around 300 mixed martial artists and boxers) there are two elements that set this investigation apart. For one, it is multidimensional in that it includes neurological, cognitive and linguistic tests; for another, it is longitudinal – which is to say, fighters are retested annually. The strategy is to ferret out connections between brain changes and function.

Dr. Charles Bernick, the principal investigator of the study, insisted that he and his associates are not fighting against the fighting arts, but instead fighting to make combat sports as safe as possible. "The hope," he said, "is that we will be able to find markers of impending problems and then intervene, perhaps by suggesting a pause in activities or in some cases a halt." Dr. Bernick also suggested that there might come a time when therapeutic interventions such as medications will be developed to help protect and treat the traumatized brain.

Some significant results are



Dr. Charles Bernick (left) said his goal is to make combat sports as safe as possible. In the smaller image, women's champion Layla McCarter completes an assessment at Cleveland Clinic. And, to the right, MRIs show that punches weaken functional connections between the important executive (A) and motor control (B) regions of the brain.



Freddie Roach fought longer than he should have. He now suffers from Parkinson's.

Courtesy of the Professional Fighters Brain Health Study; Roach: Landry Major-Getty Images

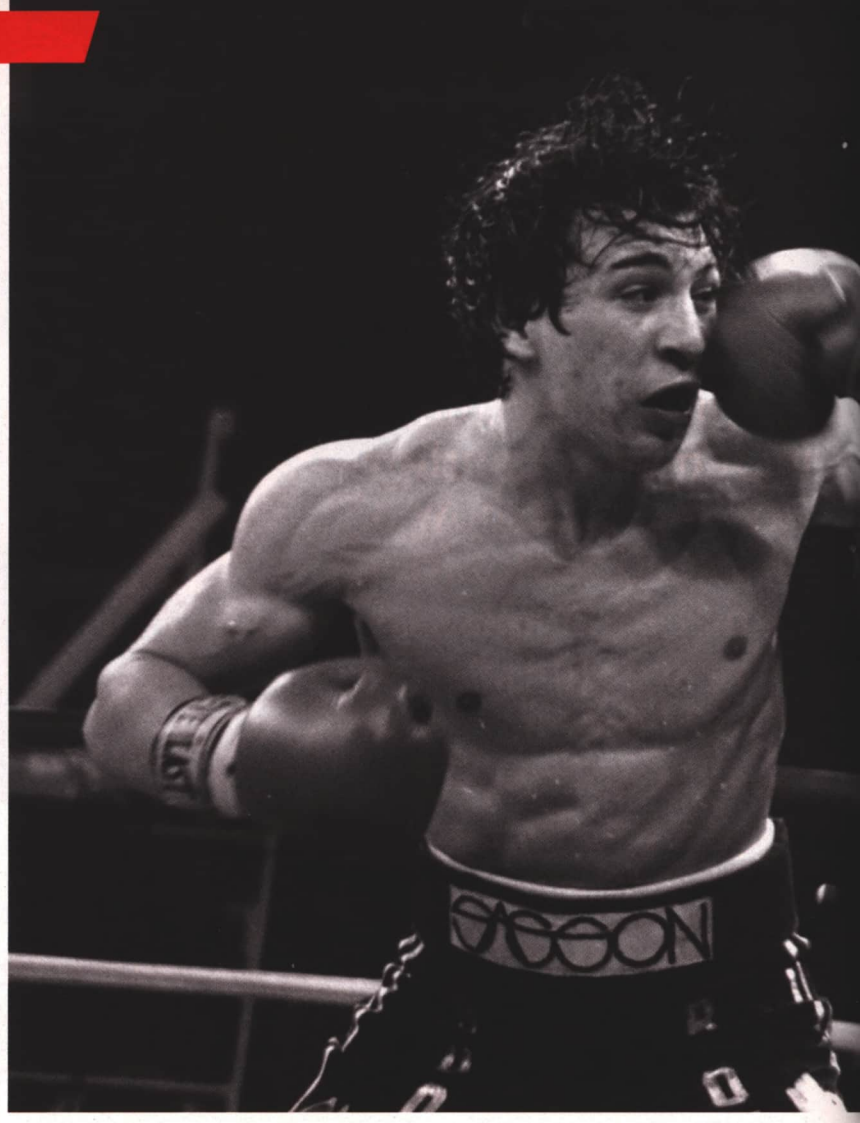
already beginning to bubble up. In a forthcoming article, Dr. Bernick and his team report that taking punches in bunches after bunches is associated with lower brain volumes in parts of the brain related to cognitive and motor function. At the March 2013 annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology, the same group disclosed that there are measurable relationships between the structure and function of that part of the noggin called the "basal ganglia" and the degree of fight exposure and the number of times a fighter has been knocked out. It is well known that disruptions in the basal ganglia play a significant role in the development of Parkinson's disease. Finally, preliminary data from the same study indicate that the dangerous changes in gray matter do not usually begin to appear until after the fifth year of professional fighting.

Some boxers can engage in thousands of rounds of sparring and a hundred bouts without suffering any apparent damage. Others, however, will begin to manifest symptoms after only a handful of contests. What makes one individual immune to the effects of hooks and crosses and another susceptible? It is too early to determine. The results collected are currently based on group data and so it is not yet possible to predict the risks for a particular individual. However, the hope is that further studies will isolate the factors that spell vulnerability to repetitive head trauma.

Bob Arum has been a supporter of both the Ruvo Center and the Professional Fighters Brain Health Study from its inception. The Hall of Fame promoter was emphatic: "We want boxers to know when they are getting into trouble and to stop boxing if that's what is necessary." Arum continued, "However, boxers are like other professional athletes and many times they just don't want to know."

It's true. Rashida Ali, Muhammad Ali's daughter and a prominent figure in the fight against Parkinson's told me, "I'm excited about this research. It is a great opportunity for boxers." And yet she observed, "But even if it were around during my dad's time in the ring, it wouldn't have mattered because he loved boxing so much that nothing would have stopped him from fighting."

Hall of Fame trainer Freddie Roach is a veteran of 53 pro bouts. Against the firm counsel



of his legendary trainer, Eddie Futch, a man who had witnessed four deaths in the ring, Roach campaigned on as a fighter for at least a year longer than he should have. He now suffers from Parkinson's. Informed of the Professional Fighters Brain Health Study, Roach told the Los Angeles Times, "Something from a high medical authority that can show a boxer's deterioration [and] force guys to retire would be good. That's the only way you're going to get guys to listen."

In addition to working with active combat artists, Dr. Bernick is also eager to recruit retired pros. Former heavyweight champion Leon Spinks, who has seen much better days, has gotten involved. He told CBS News, "I never did think I had brain damage. ... I don't want the kids to go through what I went through."

A couple of months ago, Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini travelled to the Ruvo Center to participate in the study. He confided, "My son asked me, 'Aren't you nervous about what they might find out?' I said 'no,' but even if I were I would want to know so that I could get treatment and prepare for whatever might be coming."

"We want boxers to know when they are getting into trouble and to stop boxing if that's what is necessary. However, boxers are like other professional athletes and many times they just don't want to know."

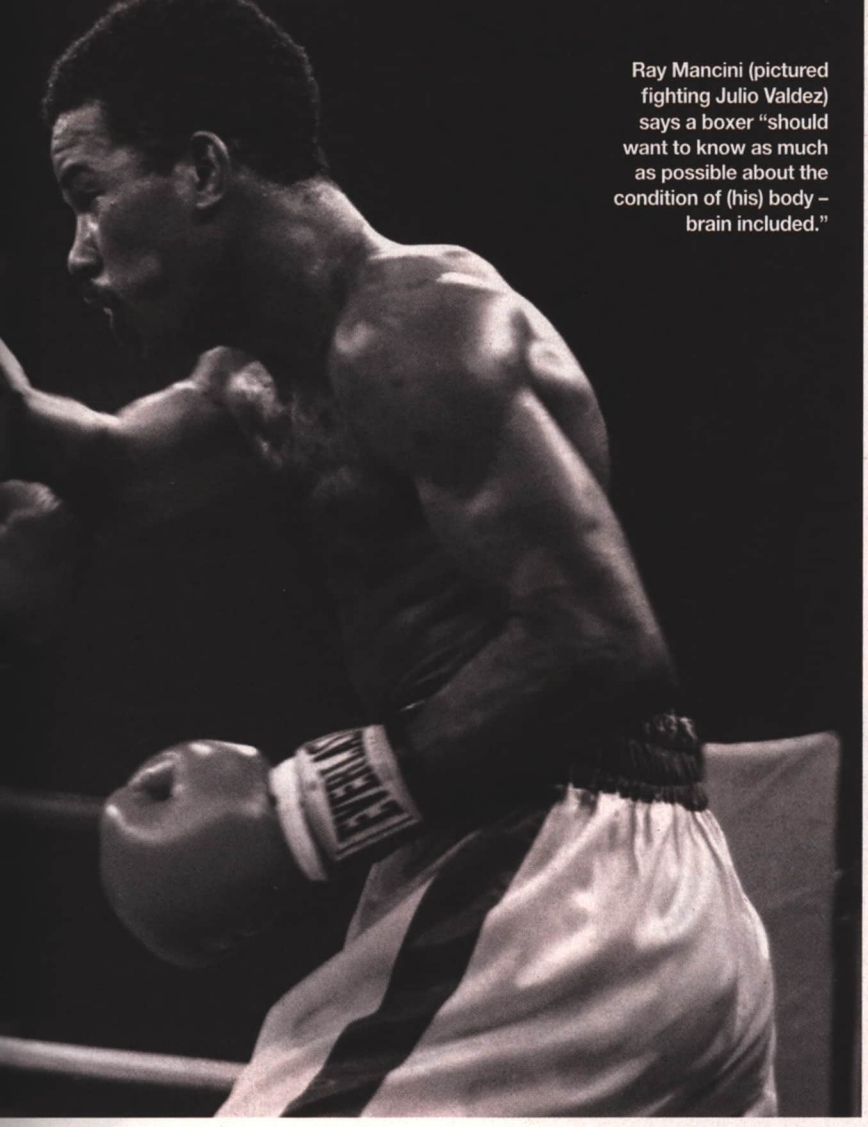
— Bob Arum

Mancini joked that after being examined, he received a call telling him not to worry, "There's nothing up there!" But in a more serious vein and when pressed as to whether he would have enlisted in the research during his fighting days, Boom Boom punched out the word "Absolutely!" adding, "As a professional, you should want to know as much as possible about the condition of your body – brain included."

Still, although they receive free assessments and treatment, many boxers are reluctant to get into the ring with a battery of tests. Perhaps there is a sense that if brain troubles are in the offing and there is nothing that can be done about them, then it is better to enjoy the sunny days that you have without thinking of the ominous clouds of future impairment. Mancini disagreed. "You can't choose to be an ostrich, to put your head in the sand," he said. "Even if the news is bad, you owe it to your family to find out what is going to happen so that they can prepare for it."

★

My short and unillustrious boxing career began at the Gramercy Park Gym in New York City. On my first day in that temple of masculinity, I began shadow



Ray Mancini (pictured fighting Julio Valdez) says a boxer "should want to know as much as possible about the condition of (his) body – brain included."

boxing and glanced over at three or four older gentlemen sitting by the soot-filled windows. Like a punch, the question hit me: 'Why are their heads all shaking?' When I moved back to Jersey, my trainer was an elderly guy who notched scores of fights. His noggin also worked like a bobble head. Out of profound respect, I won't begin to register the long list of great fighters whose love and devotion to the noble art left them a pocket full of mumbles and much worse.

Thanks in part to this study and the media attention surrounding the long-term effects of football-related concussions, sensibilities are shifting. During the pitched battle that was the Timothy Bradley vs. Ruslan Provodnikov fight, the trainers of both combatants (Joel Diaz and Roach) threatened to stop the action because they believed their fighters were absorbing too much punishment – even though it was a championship tilt and neither one of them was exactly on the brink of a knockout. At night's end, some boxing analysts applauded the action but shook their heads about the possibility that the courage and determination of these two gladiators might have taken them into the health danger zone. These are not concerns that would have been resonated a decade ago. In time, perhaps, these sentiments will trickle down and dilute the blood lust of the boxing fan base, so that crowds won't howl as if they have been cheated when a ref or corner signals enough is more than enough. RING

GETTY IMAGES/KEVORK DJANSEZIAN

A MESSAGE TO FIGHTERS

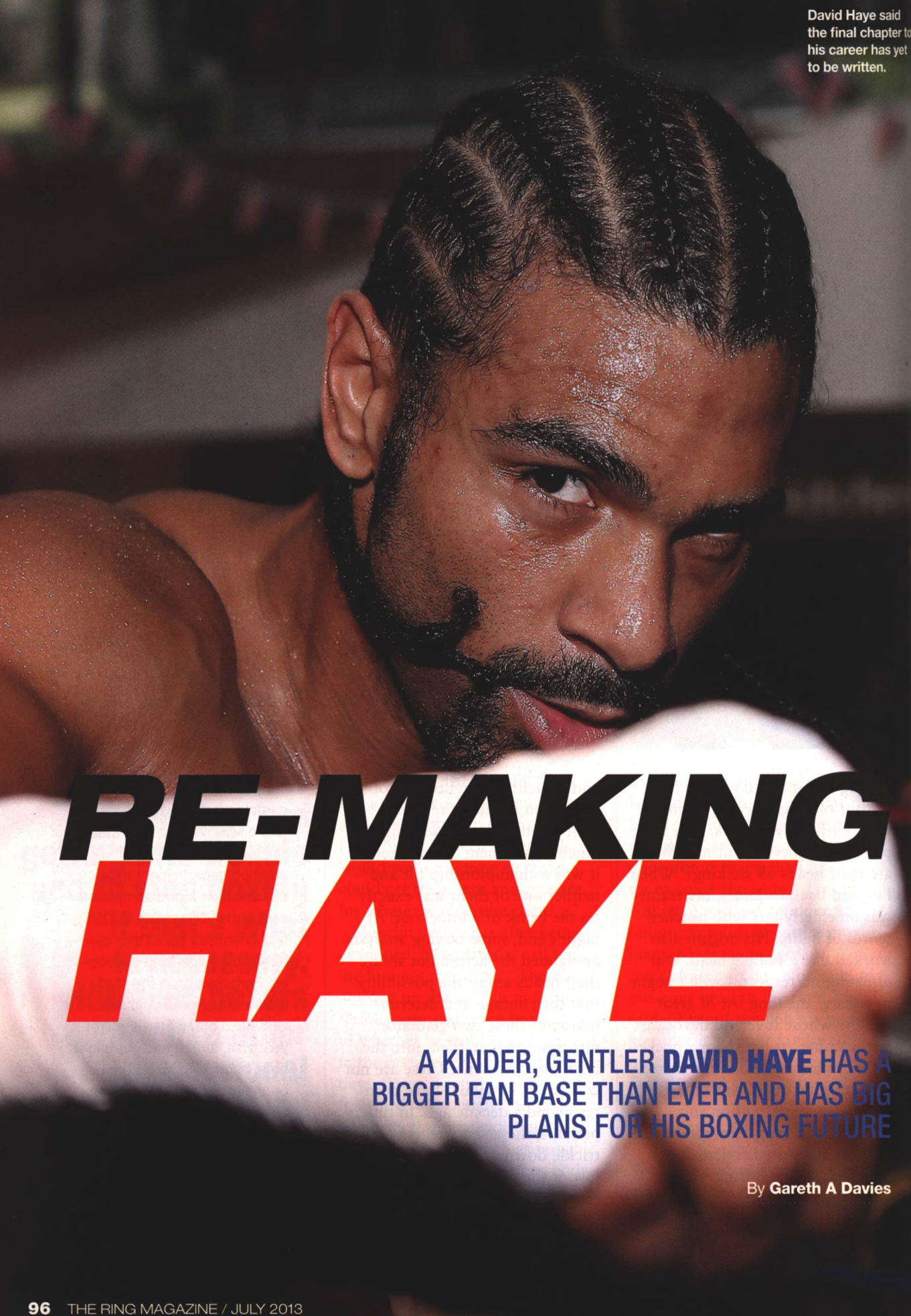
Dr. Bernick offered this invitation to boxers interested in participating in the study: "Licensed, professional fighters (boxing or mixed martial arts) with at least one documented professional fight and retired professional fighters with 10 or more documented professional fights are eligible to participate in the study.

Each participant undergoes the following testing: questionnaires on mood, sleep and impulsivity; MRI scan of brain; a recorded sample of speech; a test of balance; memory and other tests of mental function; a blood test. The study visits last approximately two hours and are performed once a year for five consecutive years.

Information obtained from the study is kept completely confidential. However, a participant may use the results of the MRI scan to fulfill state licensing requirements. In addition, a participant may request their blood sample be sent for HIV, Hepatitis B, CBC, and chemistry panel that can be used for licensing purposes. Participation in the study is free of charge. For those who have completed the first year visit, airfare and overnight hotel accommodations will be provided for each subsequent yearly visit, if needed.

To inquire about participation, please call (702) 675-5237 or email BrainHealth@ccf.org."

– Gordon Marino



David Haye said the final chapter to his career has yet to be written.

RE-MAKING HAYE

A KINDER, GENTLER **DAVID HAYE** HAS A BIGGER FAN BASE THAN EVER AND HAS BIG PLANS FOR HIS BOXING FUTURE

By **Gareth A Davies**

Love him or loathe him, David Haye remains Britain's biggest box office attraction in the ring: He comes with serious intentions and has an X-factor, good looks, attitude and arrogance. And now he's back.

When the 32-year-old revealed his return to the ring, after a brief flirtation with retirement, no one who has any history in boxing was the least bit surprised.

Indeed, there were even a few sages who reckoned "Hayemaker" may have wasted a couple of years. Haye had hatched a cunning, if obvious plan when he announced late in March a two-fight plan, which, if successful, will place him within striking distance of both Klitschko brothers.

He intends to be the mandatory challenger to any one of the four world heavyweight titles the Ukrainians hold.

A complex jigsaw lies ahead to be deemed first in line (look at Alexander Povetkin and how long he has been in such a position) but Haye already has powerful standing with all four sanctioning bodies. Currently, he is ranked No. 5 by the World Boxing Council, No. 1 by the World Boxing Association, No. 4 by the International Boxing Federation and No. 4 by the World Boxing Organization.

Haye's trainer/manager Adam Booth, who will also turn promoter for this phase of the Londoner's career, told me that he fully expects to have to go and "court" the sanctioning bodies' powerful presidents "to jockey for position."

The first stage in that process came last year, when Haye had "clear the air" talks with Jose Sulaiman, president of the WBC, behind closed doors. The details about the now infamous brawl in Munich with Dereck Chisora at the post-fight press conference needed laying to rest.

The plan from here is this: Haye will face a world-ranked top 10 contender late on June 29 in Manchester. The second phase will see him in action again in October.

In a sense, the procedure for the Haye-Booth masterplan is not a new one. Haye's career has been planned precisely and in detail by trainer and fighter since day one, over a decade ago. Three pillars have espoused their joint philosophy in pugilism: titles at the very highest level, highest earnings possible and leave with Haye's faculties intact.

"I realized I'm a performer, an entertainer, and I needed to step back in."

They pride themselves on attention to the detail. They are both individualists, Booth naturally suspicious, Haye ever the plotter.

Clearly, he could have walked away from boxing having already made a fortune estimated at $20 million (£13 million), and with considerable success in the ring.

A former three-belt cruiserweight champion of the world, he nicked the WBA title from 7-foot-tall Russian giant Nikolai Valuev in November 2009 to great acclaim, defending the title twice – against John Ruiz and Audley Harrison – before losing it on a wide unanimous points decision to Wladimir Klitschko with three belts on the line. It was one of his worst nights in the ring, watched by the widest audience.

Haye announced his retirement in October 2011, at the age of 31, having insisted in interview after interview that he had by design chosen to call time on his career at the age of 30. He had made his mind up to do so at the age of 12.

The dramatic U-turn in his mind came after sit-down talks with Booth, in which Haye concurred with Booth's plan to go the mandatory route or bust. If the Bermondsey fighter had not agreed to the plan, it would have spelled permanent retirement.

Rocky Marciano, Marvin Hagler, Lennox Lewis and Joe Calzaghe, in modern times, walked away from the square circle and never came back. Not so for Haye: He loves the limelight and reckons the final chapter has not yet been written.

The comeback plan was hatched early in 2013 after Vitali Klitschko had failed to reply to potential contract talks from Hayemaker's office. It was that which prompted Haye's move.

The song "My Way" might have been written for Haye. There has been the unorthodox and the enigmatic in equal measure in almost every facet of the way in which he and his team conduct affairs – even his biographer Elliot Worsell has intimated that Haye can be infuriatingly difficult to gauge at times – yet now he will take the conventional route to the title.

Haye has his naysayers, but he loves to trawl the forums for others' opinions on him. He takes a peculiar delight from reading his critics. He often surfs the internet boxing forums and message boards in the hours before he fights.

From being pilloried for the manner of his defeat to Klitschko, Haye has come full circle in the last two years. From my deal-

Scott Heavey/Getty Images

ings being around him, he has also matured in several ways. But there is no question that the PR blunder of showing his damaged toe and his decision to fall down whenever Klitschko leaned on him in their contest in Germany were ill-conceived. Mud sticks. And Haye has been fighting off a group of detractors ever since. Another fight with either Klitschko would be a shot at redemption.

But like all stars, whatever Haye does seems to be a story. He can't stay out of the headlines. Out of the maelstrom of the Chisora brawl in Munich, allied with the nous of promoter Frank Warren, Haye took part in the biggest fight in the U.K. last year.

He settled the grudge with Chisora in front of 30,000 fans at West Ham United's football stadium in July, knocking his foe out in the fifth round in an atmosphere of high drama. Haye had demanded a steel fence between him and Chisora at every news conference together. He had security laid on until the first bell tolled. The fight reportedly brought Haye a purse of around $3 million (£2 million).

Then, in November, he headed into a celebrity reality television series in the Australian jungle for 21 days. The man himself had an epiphany, and the public saw the real David Deron Haye.

His popularity grew anew during the very public stint in *I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here*. He was simply being himself, for three weeks, in a show which drew around 10 million viewers per night.

This was not the brash stunt-puller who carried the T-shirt depicting him holding the decapitated heads of the Klitschko brothers, the braggart who said he would "beat Jean-Marc Mormeck worse than Rodney King was beaten in the L.A. riots," or threatening to beat Audley Harrison like it was a "gang rape."

Quite the opposite. Haye was charming, thoughtful and was a credit to himself and the sport. He even bared his buttocks in an outside shower, which earned him a legion of female admirers. His physique stood out on the show.

He finished third in a popularity contest to two mainstream entertainment stars – the actress Charlie Brooks and the singer Ashley Roberts. He had discovered newfound crossover popularity.

The David Haye Story is not complete, he reasoned to me earlier this year, adding that he has developed "something of an obsession with Vitali Klitschko" with a "final chapter still to be written" in the topsy-turvy world of the south London slugger.

Having seen Haye on several occasions this year, something has changed. At a fan day, in January, he greeted more than a thousand well-wishers, some of them having queued for four to five hours to see him at his London gym, in a converted brick railway arch. The

Haye is coming off one of his most satisfying victories – over Dereck Chisora last July – after which he "retired."

central trains thunder ominously overhead, a couple each minute. The queue stretched a few hundred meters up the road.

I sat in his company for a few hours, just a few feet away, as he met the fans. It was extraordinary. Haye has a serious fanbase. And a new one, created far from the heavyweight jungle, on reality television.

"The general public saw a different side of me to the pre-fight hype man," he reflected. "Ninety-five percent of the feedback I've had since being on that show has been positive, and you can't really complain at that."

But now competition is also rising on British shores. Haye has a rival in the British heavyweight Tyson Fury. The young fighter is also seeking world title challenges. He also likes making the kind of noise that the brash, younger Haye once did.

There is the growing prospect, if promoter Mick Hennessy allows it, of Fury facing Haye in October. It would generate more money than Fury-Klitschko and might even be a better option for Fury.

Haye has balked in the past at the notion of facing Fury. But I understand that behind the scenes, Haye is slowly warming to the idea of facing the 6-foot-9 fighter from Manchester. Other options for Haye in October, I understand, could be Manuel Charr or the Russian Denis Boytsov.

Haye reckons that his thoughts of a fighting future were sharpened while in the celebrity television series.

Peculiar as it may seem, going onto a reality show, a captive in a jungle studio, created time and space for Haye to think. He had no phone, no laptop. Just the company of 12 other celebrities whom he did not know. Alone with his thoughts for three weeks, he had a realization within himself: that he is a fighter, that he loves to fight, that he wants to be the champion again.

"It was the most bored I have ever been [in the Australian jungle]," he said. "But I remember thinking about what had been the good times for me – and they have all been at the big victories I've had. I realized I'm a performer, an entertainer, and I needed to step back in. …

"Maybe I didn't fully accept it at the time, but the seeds were being sown in the jungle for this comeback. It began to dawn on me that the only way to get a fight with the brothers would be to fight two Top-10 fighters and then force the Klitschkos to fight me."

That was re-affirmed as the weeks passed this year. "Vitali had not said anything early in 2013," Haye said. "I'd heard rumblings he would retire, while some people said he was going to continue, and fight his mandatory. For me, everything is up in the air, so I didn't think it was worth focusing 100 percent on one brother. I could do that, and then it could all change.

"My view is that as long as I am fighting and knocking out Top-10-ranked opponents, the head honcho in any governing body will recognize I'm back."

The trash talk, this time, may be tempered.

"I twigged a few years back that the media needs a few dramatic lines to create headlines," Haye said. "But I definitely have a different fan base now. I was in the jungle being myself, and so if I'm now out there saying 'I'm gonna rip someone's head off,' or loads of crazy s--t, the new fans will get a shock.

"A lot of the stuff that I've said in the past was close to the bone and got headlines. It seems like I don't really need to do that anymore. I've got a wide enough demographic to be interested in me other than the hardened boxing fans. It's hard to do a story about a boxer who only says, 'I'm fighting this guy on this date.'"

But he regrets nothing he said in the past, aimed at his foes. "When I did that I'd only had one heavyweight fight, I was just the cruiserweight champion, needing to get headlines and needing to cause some controversy. And it did," he said.

"It was big news in Germany, all over the world. I've got the T-shirts now. I'll frame them one day, maybe wear it to the ring when I finally face Vitali."

★

The stone is cast. Haye is back in the gym, thinking about knocking out another giant. But is there not a fear that, like Povetkin, he may be forced into a long chess match and a waiting game?

"I try not to stress myself out thinking about it," Haye said. "It's no longer a logical process with the sanctioning bodies. Being mandatory does not make you the automatic challenger. If someone doesn't want to fight you, they have ways out of it. But I looked at the rankings the other day and didn't recognize 80 percent of the heavyweights in there."

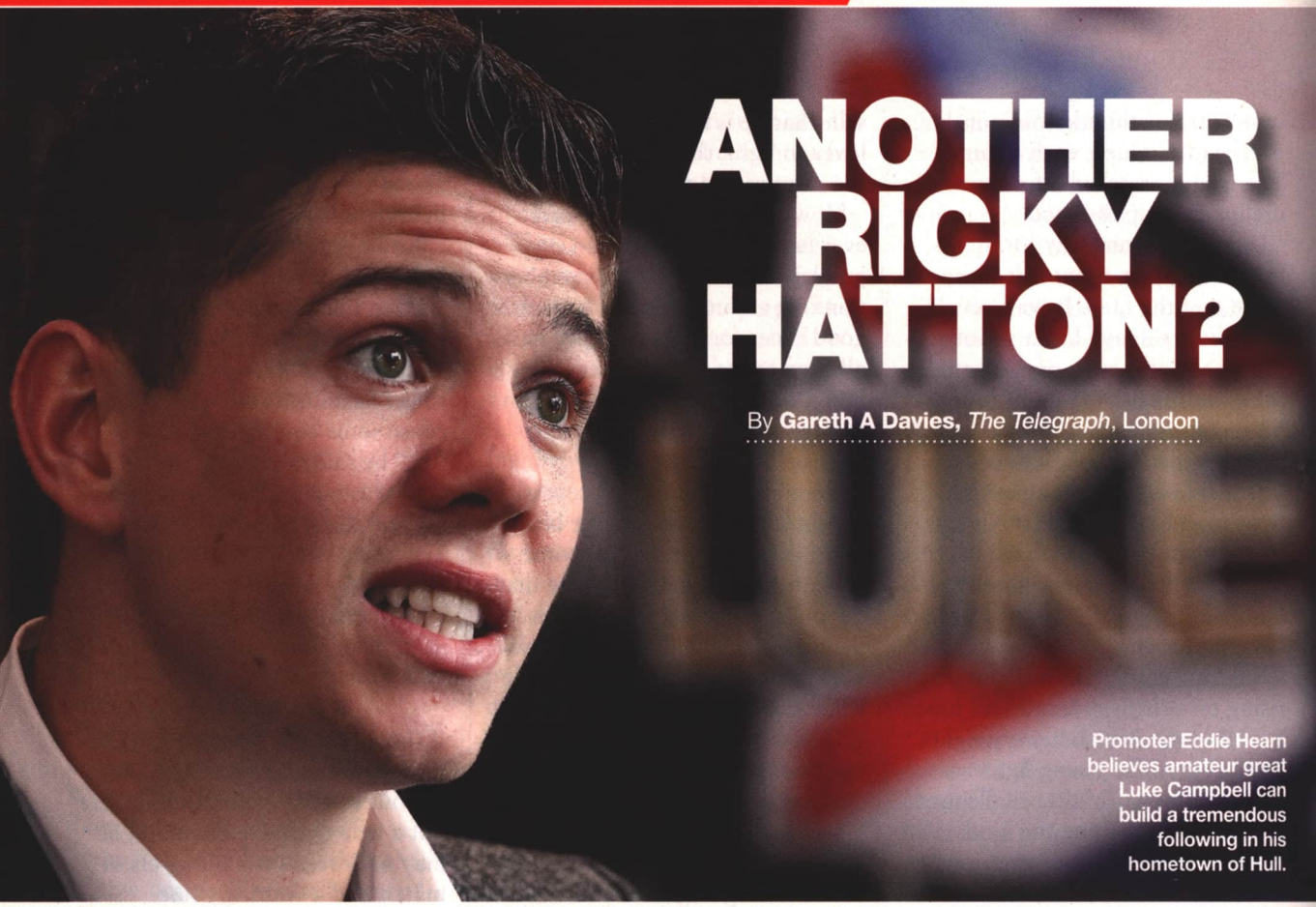
Tunnel-vision, he says, will keep him focused. "I love the training. It's tough but the rewards are great. I remember walking out of the stadium after Chisora. It was raining, but no one was unhappy. Getting the vibe from everybody was great, and I'm looking forward to doing it again. On my day I believe I can knock anybody out."

By that, he means the Klitschkos. Boxing should rejoice. The journey continues for Haye, the heavyweight made humble in the jungle. RING

Matthew Lewis/Getty Images

ANOTHER RICKY HATTON?

By **Gareth A Davies,** *The Telegraph*, London



Promoter Eddie Hearn believes amateur great Luke Campbell can build a tremendous following in his hometown of Hull.

Eddie Hearn could not have been a happier man when he signed Luke Campbell, the 2012 Olympic bantamweight gold medalist, to his burgeoning stable.

He had fought off the competition – which included Golden Boy Promotions – to raise the hand of Britain's most successful amateur in history: European gold medalist in 2008 – the first Englishman to win the title since 1961 – world silver medalist in 2011 and top of the podium at the London Games.

Some record that is. Even more remarkable, 10 months before the Games there were doubts about the likeable 25-year-old father of two boys being selected for the team.

Hearn reckons that Campbell has the potential "to create a following in Hull like Ricky Hatton once enjoyed in Manchester." It will take some doing, but judging by the tens of thousands who turned out for his triumphant return to the port city with his gilded orb in August 2012, they would flock to see him facing Mickey Mouse.

Local heroes are great starting points for promoters and neophyte pugilists. In time, he could become a global fighter, yet still locally relevant. For those unfamiliar with Kingston upon Hull, on England's eastern seaboard, its economy was forged on trading and seafaring, once including whaling, but now just trawler seafishing.

In boxing terms, Paul Ingle took the IBF featherweight title by unanimous points decision from Manuel Medina on a memorable night at the KC Sports Arena in Hull back in 1999. I was ringside, and the support for Ingle was awesome.

What was intriguing on the day that Campbell joined forces with Hearn was that he revealed he'd almost quit boxing in 2009, aged 21, and might have become a North Sea trawlerman.

Personal depression in 2009 hit him hard. He'd had a hand injury. "I wasn't performing, I wasn't happy, I was homesick, the coaching team at the time hated me. And I hated them. I was so close to throwing in boxing altogether." It seems unthinkable now that he could have been lost to the sport.

Trawling, he reckons, would have been a viable option. "My brother's a fisherman, he works away at sea," he said. "Four or five of his mates do that and work away for weeks at a time. That could have been me."

Campbell had been seriously courted and contacted by Golden Boy Promotions, with CEO Richard Schaefer having flown to London to discuss the details. But he knew which side of "The Pond"

he wished to be based on.

What is not clear yet is whether he'll fight at junior lightweight or lightweight. The former for me. He is long, willowy and it would afford him distinct advantages given his propensity to box so cleverly on the edge of his range.

What made his decision concrete about building his career at home was the passion of U.K. boxing fans. "The way the crowds of 10,000 supported us at the Olympics day in, day out, stayed with me," he said. "I've been to top shows in America but the best fans in the world are the British fans. They show the most passion. My dream is to be a part of that."

Hearn has a master plan, which like all good plans, begins at home.

"We want to build him in Hull," Hearn said. "He's not a kid driven by finances. He looks at the bigger picture." Campbell has signed a two-year deal, and can box as many times as he is fit enough to do.

"I've never seen such huge support in a city for one fighter since the days of Ricky Hatton. I went up there twice and people were chasing him down the street. No one will let him pay for anything. He's the crossover star we need in boxing, the perfect ambassador," Hearn told me.

"He works so hard, he's a dad, a role model, and in Hull, he has the freedom of the city. Not officially, but he so clearly has it. When I was with him up there he was approached by old ladies, children, middle-aged men. That's what he is – a genuine crossover star.

"When you hear over and over again 'We are so proud of our Luke,' it's so powerful. We know we can get either a 12,000 or 20,000 capacity venue."

Campbell will make his open-air debut in July, either at the city's football stadium or a rugby league stadium.

Hearn also sees parallels with Carl Froch. Not in his fighting style, as Campbell is very much the boxer, but in the fastidious way in which he adheres to self-improvement. He's also a detailist. Hearn explained: "We were on the train the other day, and he was making notes on his pad."

Hearn looked over the pad. There were painstakingly made lists of what Campbell expected of himself. "Things to work on – No. 1 – keep left arm down to protect the liver. No. 2 – Move feet in and out. It went on and on. That's Carl Froch all over," Hearn said.

"No one expected Carl to be the great fighter he has become when he set out. People say to me, 'Luke was a good amateur, do you think he'll adapt his style to be a good pro?' He built that style to win as an amateur. Because he's so bright he'll build a style to win as a pro. He's so switched on. It's genuinely impressive."

★

TYSON FURY

Tyson Fury left his mark on America. But his Stateside debut created as many questions as it provided answers, and many

Tyson Fury's performance against Steve Cunningham (left) left us scratching our heads.

watching were left scratching their heads. The 6-foot-9, 250-pound heavyweight entertained with his belligerent style in the build-up but ended up in a bizarre contest with Steve Cunningham.

Plenty of rival heavyweights will have been licking their lips seeing the right hand which put Fury down in the second round. Cunningham was not even considered a heavy puncher as a cruiserweight.

Fury got up off the canvas to win and clearly has the spirit. What he lacked, commented on by many colleagues, was finesse in the performance. What is undeniable, though, is that Fury does bring excitement. It is a case of expect the unexpected from the traveler with fighting genes going back generations.

★

JOE CALZAGHE – BERNARD HOPKINS – NATHAN CLEVERLY

Joe Calzaghe was in Nathan Cleverly's dressing room after the light heavyweight's fifth successful defense of his WBO title against Robin Krasniqi at Wembley in April.

Cleverly's one-sided points victory divided opinion. Cleverly was frustrated – he wanted a finish. Some pundits were severe on the mathematics major, insisting he was off balance, his footwork poor.

From my seat, Cleverly was concise and clinical, without showing the power to put his opponent away. It was interesting to hear Calzaghe's take on the performance.

"I thought he did well … he boxed within himself," Calzaghe said. "I knew Krasniqi would be tough. I think there are similarities between Nathan's and my career. I think he'll raise his standard as the opponents get better.

"I'd like to see him more active, though, fighting more regularly. The jab, uppercut and body shots were good, but he probably wanted to finish him off. A Bernard Hopkins fight would be great for Nathan down the line. He's the biggest name in the business, so hopefully Frank (Warren) can get him over.

"If Nathan fights the right fight, he's got a good chance against Hopkins. It would be great to bring (Hopkins) over to Wales. I think we'd get 30,000 people at that."

Boxing's great old man, as we know, loves the travel, thrives on the hate.

Hopkins' sojourn to Wales would be a major financial undertaking, though promoter Frank Warren is open to it, he has said. It would take a huge gate to help generate the millions the oldest world champion in history would demand.

It was a great occasion when Calzaghe took thousands of fans following him to Las Vegas in 2008, where he outsmarted the Philadelphian in a split points victory over Hopkins. This would be like a rematch of sorts, against the rising champion who sparred hundreds of rounds with Calzaghe.

The old ring fox, almost twice the age of Cleverly, would be the greatest test. Warren will look to match Cleverly with Beibut Shumenov on the same night Hopkins defends against Karo Murat in August.

As a footnote on that Wembley card – which started at 4 p.m. and culminated with Dereck Chisora as the final act at 12:45 a.m. – it is worth recording how good 24-year-old junior bantamweight Paul Butler looked. He added the Commonwealth title to the British title he holds. It will be intriguing to see how "The Baby-Faced Assassin" looks when he moves up a level.

U.K. TOP 10

Gareth A Davies' monthly pound-for-pound list for British boxers.

1. CARL FROCH
2. AMIR KHAN
3. DAVID HAYE
4. RICKY BURNS
5. KELL BROOK
6. NATHAN CLEVERLY
7. CARL FRAMPTON
8. TYSON FURY
9. SCOTT QUIGG
10. GEORGE GROVES

Through fights of April 21

★

JAZZA DICKENS

Regular readers of this column will be aware of this correspondent's penchant for boxing's ability to heal, inspire and transform lives.

Delving into the back story of James "Jazza" Dickens, the English junior featherweight champion, is heartwarming.

The 21-year-old, who has great hand speed and utter dedication to his craft, is an inspiration. As a kid, both his parents were heroin addicts. He knows there are many children who have grown up in

Fellow Welshman Joe Calzaghe praised Nathan Cleverly's performance against Robin Krasniqi (left) and expects him to improve as his opponents get tougher.

such a way and have found themselves on the streets, unable to face the reality of the adults around them wasting away.

Dickens, at the age of 13, found the gym. Then, aged 17, when his father went through rehabilitation and consequently to church, the young boxer also found religion.

The two pillars in his life have created a young man carrying a message of hope, and he reckons he's guided by a "higher force."

"I don't go out. My nights out are when I go to an arena to box," said the lad from Merseyside, Liverpool.

Ricky Hatton, his promoter, sees a bright future, moving his man quietly up the sidelines while high-profile rivals Scott Quigg and Carl Frampton steal all the headlines.

★

HAROON KHAN

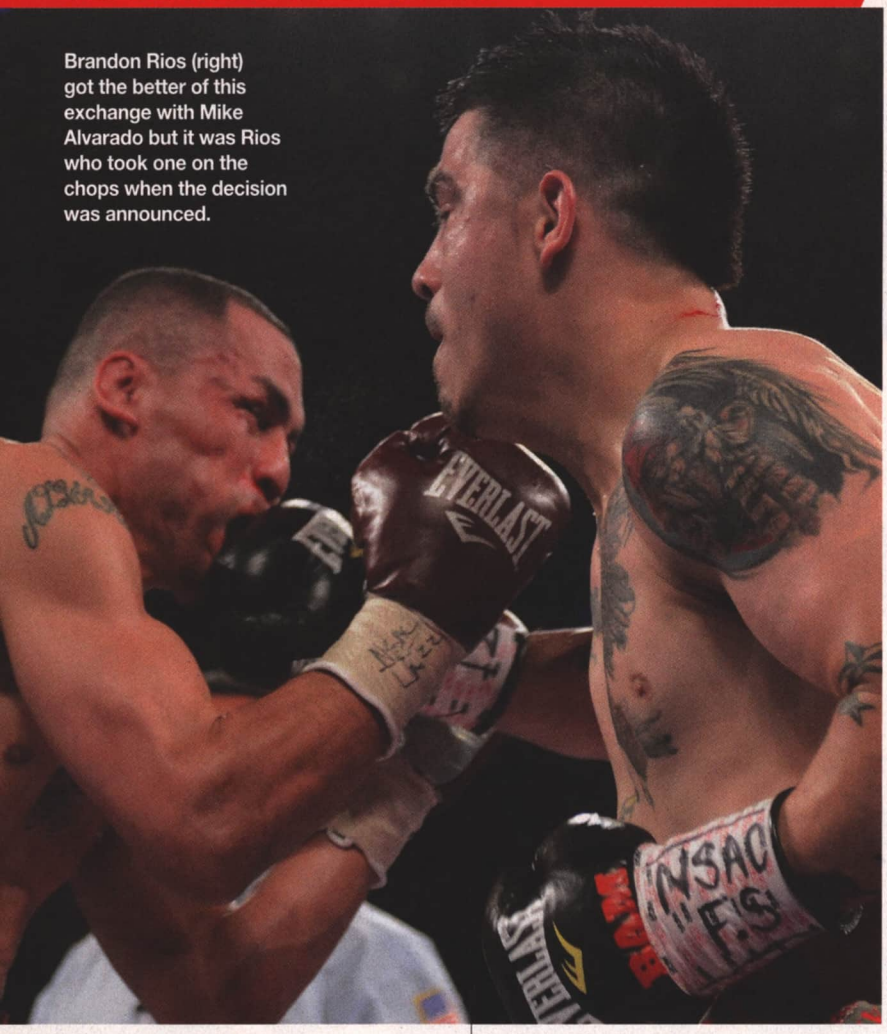
Funny talking to Haroon Khan just before his professional debut at junior bantamweight on the undercard of his brother Amir's fight with Julio Diaz in Sheffield. Haroon was being promoted and paid by his elder brother for his night's work, but he revealed a couple of details about their upbringing, and indeed, how there is no favoritism in the family.

"Amir still gets a rollocking here and there and a talking to (from mum and dad), or told to go get the shopping from the supermarket," the younger Khan said.

He also revealed that the pair – Haroon, at 22, is four years younger than Amir – would often take to sparring at home while growing up.

"An ad break would come on television and Amir would urge me to spar," he said. "There were gloves all over the house. One night, a single round went on for 45 minutes and became a competition of who could keep going the longest, with hands still up." What a shame that the Kid Khan vs. King Khan session was not recorded. Cheers.

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for *The Telegraph*, London.



Brandon Rios (right) got the better of this exchange with Mike Alvarado but it was Rios who took one on the chops when the decision was announced.

MIKE ALVARADO UD 12 BRANDON RIOS

Date: March 30, 2013
Site: Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas
Division: Junior welterweight
Weights: Alvarado 140; Rios 140
RING rating (going into fight): Rios No. 6; Alvarado No. 8
Network: HBO

★ So what's left to say about Mike Alvarado and Brandon Rios? Plenty, it turns out. They exhausted the superlatives and themselves throughout 12 rounds of a dynamic rematch that, in the end, left a keen appetite for more. Rios-Alvarado is an unfinished story.

Chapter 3 is waiting to be written after Alvarado (34-1, 23 knockouts) surprised Rios (31-1-1, 23 KOs) with unexpected adjustments and an ability to sustain a varied attack. It wasn't the single-minded brawl predicted by so many. It wasn't because Alvarado isn't the one-dimensional brawler he was portrayed to be.

The assumption was that a coherent plan would splinter and scatter with one big punch from Rios. Alvarado would revert to form. But only that stereotype was left splintered and scattered by Alvarado, whose agile footwork between punching exchanges at the start and end of nearly every round confused and frustrated Rios.

"I'm always smarter the second time around," Alvarado said after winning on all three scorecards – 115-113, 115-113 and 114-113.

The expectation in the days before the rematch was that Chapter 2 would simply be a violent extension of the first one, which ended with Alvarado out on his feet in the seventh round after a spontaneous combustion of punches from Rios in Carson, Calif. Rios said repeatedly that he expected the Alvarado he saw in October to show up in March.

It didn't happen, in part because of a regimen that took Alvarado home to Denver. He did his roadwork in the nearby mountains. Trainer and manager Henry Delgado said Alvarado ran the trails in the thin air that gave him the legs and lungs to do what Rios never foresaw.

"In the first fight, there was no intelligence," Top Rank promoter Bob Arum said. "Just boom, boom, boom. Here, he had a game plan and he executed it."

Alvarado's discipline was evident after a wild second round. Rios hurt him with a left hand. If Alvarado's brawling nature was there, it would have exhibited itself then. But it didn't. For the next 10 rounds, he would trade punches during the opening moments, then backpedal out of Rios' target zone, only to return for the final few moments. The tactic never allowed Rios, an instinctive fighter, to establish a rhythm.

After the scores were announced, Rios demanded a third fight before joining Alvarado in the emergency room for precautionary tests. An immediate rematch is unlikely, Arum said. For now, there are other possibilities for each, including a shot at Manny Pacquiao. For later and for their legacies, there's only one possibility:

Alvarado-Rios III.

– Norm Frauenheim

G.RIGONDEAUX UD 12 NONITO DONAIRE

Date: April 13, 2013
Site: Radio City Music Hall, New York City
Division: Junior featherweight
Weights: Donaire 121.6; Rigondeaux 121.5
RING rating (going into fight): Donaire Champion; Rigondeaux No. 1
Network: HBO

★ It was an off-key night at an iconic venue. Instead of sweet music at Radio City Music Hall, there were boos and only some sweet science from Guillermo Rigondeaux, whose unappreciated skills are as tough to sell as they are to beat.

Nonito Donaire (31-2, 20 KOs) couldn't deal with Rigondeaux (12-0, 8 KOs) or

Naoki Fukuda

a laundry list of distractions in losing a unanimously humiliating decision. It was an abrupt end to the applause he heard a couple of nights before the opening bell when he was honored as the 2012 Fighter of the Year at the Boxing Writers Association of America's annual dinner.

"I apologize," Donaire said after losing 116-111, 115-112 and 114-113.

The apology, however, didn't alleviate the sting of a loss that was bad for business on Rigondeaux's end as well. Promoter Bob Arum was suddenly saddled with a fighter whose biggest victory only seemed to re-emphasize an old nickname: Rigondull.

"It was not a very engaging fight," Arum told ringside reporters after Rigondeaux built an insurmountable lead for nine rounds and then survived a 10th-round knockdown.

Rigondeaux, a Cuban Olympian with two gold medals, has power and skill, Arum said, "But running the way he does really makes it not a watchable fight."

Ouch. Give Arum an "A" for honesty on a night that saw no winners and not much of a future for Rigondeaux, who at 32 isn't likely to change a style ingrained into him by a reported 400 amateur bouts. He is who he is. But that cliché raises a troubling question about Donaire.

The BWAA's election of him as Fighter of the Year stamped him as elite. But is he really? Distractions were a problem. Donaire's wife, Rachel, is expecting their first child. Donaire said he needed shoulder surgery. There were questions about his preparation as it was disclosed that he spent little time in trainer Robert Garcia's gym. They talked about the fight over the phone instead of working on it in sessions with the mitts. Five days before the weigh-in, Donaire was reported to be seven pounds heavier than the 122 mandatory.

It's hard to know whether inattention to training and distractions were linked. Nevertheless, great fighters have had to battle all of that and more against pros more accomplished than Rigondeaux. That's what elite means. The best example is Manny Pacquiao, a fellow Filipino. At his best, Pacquiao managed distractions and the fighter in front of him.

Donaire still has to prove that he can.

– Norm Frauenheim

SAUL ALVAREZ UD 12 AUSTIN TROUT

Date: April 20, 2013
Site: Alamodome, San Antonio
Division: Junior middleweight
Weights: Alvarez 153.5; Trout 153.25
RING rating (going into fight): Alvarez No. 2; Trout No. 3
Network: Showtime

★ Stages in Canelo Alvarez's career come, go and continue. First, an oddity. Then, a prodigy. Against Austin Trout, he passed another milestone that indicated true maturity yet left an unlimited horizon of potential ahead.

It's hard to believe, especially with talk of a fight against Floyd Mayweather Jr., who represents the top of the scale. Nevertheless, Alvarez (42-0-1, 30 KOs) is still evolving.

Regardless of whether he faces Mayweather in September or next year or never-ever, Alvarez's unanimous decision over Trout displayed things heretofore unseen and unexpected. It also hinted at more from an unflappable 22-year-old who seems to possess an almost unnerving sense of who he is and who he intends to be.

Against Trout (26-1, 14 KOs), there was talk that Alvarez's deficiencies would collect and conspire against him. Trout's superior foot speed and Alvarez's lack of defense would result in the Mexican's first defeat. Didn't happen because of tactics many believed were not in Alvarez's DNA.

"Canelo shocked us," Trout told the ringside media. "He boxed a lot better than I thought. We just prepared for a totally different fighter. He was the better man. He was quicker."

Unlike some at ringside, Trout didn't dispute the judging, although the 118-109 score on Stanley Christodoulou's card seemed unfair to the New Mexico junior middleweight, who got into the 154-pound mix with an upset of Miguel Cotto in December. Oren Shellenberger had it 116-111 and Rey Danseco 115-112, both for Alvarez in a fight that included open scoring.

Canelo knew the official scores after the fourth and eighth rounds, knew he was winning. The Mexico City-based WBC asked for the open scoring and Texas regulators allowed it. It took suspense out of the fight and explains why Alvarez, who knocked Trout down in the seventh, appeared to slow down in the final third of the fight. Why engage in exchanges that would risk an injury and jeopardize a possible September fight with Mayweather?

Unanswered is whether the Mexican-dominated crowd of 39,247 might have influenced the judges in a close fight. Thousands of fans followed Alvarez, a red-headed Pied Piper, to San Antonio. It didn't matter. Alvarez made sure of it.

"I was smart," Alvarez said in the ring. "Little by little, I figured out how to fight him. I was connecting with my right and my jab. I learned a lot from this fight."

Don't be surprised if he learns a lot more.

– Norm Frauenheim

No. 6 ROBERT STIEGLITZ TKO 4 No. 5 ARTHUR ABRAHAM

March 23, Magdeburg, Germany (Epix)

★ Robert Stieglitz avenged a unanimous-decision loss to Arthur Abraham seven months earlier to reclaim the WBO super middleweight title.

Stieglitz landed a game-changing overhand right in Round 2 that badly buckled Abraham (36-4, 28 KOs). Stieglitz went all-out trying to finish his fellow German but the titleholder withstood the onslaught, albeit with a badly swollen left eye.

Stieglitz (44-3, 25 KOs) focused his attack on the damaged eye and continued to bully Abraham around the ring in Round 3. Abraham looked lost and tried to survive by rabbit punching, which drew a stern warning from referee Michael Ortega. After Abraham clocked Stieglitz in the back of the head again, Ortega acted accordingly with a point deduction.

Abraham never had a chance to get back into the fight. He was deemed unfit

to continue with his left eye completely closed. Ortega called it off one second into Round 4.

No. 7 GEORGE GROVES TKO 2 BAKER BARAKAT
March 23, Magdeburg, Germany (Epix)

George Groves stayed busy while awaiting a big fight, stopping Baker Barakat in two rounds in the rising British contender's second fight in two weeks.

Groves made light work of the lightly regarded Barakat (37-14-4, 25 KOs). He concentrated on the German's midsection and buzzed his foe with a left uppercut in the waning moments of the first round.

He finished what he started in the second. He knocked Barakat down with right hands and followed up with combinations until referee Norbert Duenberger halted the bout at 2:20.

Groves (18-0, 14 KOs) recently bolted Frank Warren Promotions for Eddie Hearns' Matchroom Sport, which has him on an aggressive schedule ahead of a planned marquee fight in September in his native London. He's slated to fight again on May 25 and is now the mandatory challenger for the WBO super middleweight title held by Stieglitz.

No. 3 GENNADY GOLOVKIN KO 3 NOBUHIRO ISHIDA
March 30, Monte Carlo, Monaco (Integrated Sports PPV)

★ Gennady Golovkin got in a nice work out a couple weeks before an HBO-televised test against Matthew Macklin on June 29 was announced. It didn't last long, though. Not much does when the unbeaten Golovkin is involved.

Golovkin (26-0, 23 KOs) has an 88 percent knockout rate, which is 12 points shy of unstoppable.

Maybe Macklin has a chance at Foxwoods Casino in Mashantucket, Conn., in a middleweight bout that some say will be Golovkin's toughest.

Maybe.

Nobuhiro Ishida (24-9-2, 9 KOs) seemed to be doomed from the start. In the second round, two right hands and an uppercut left him with a cut under his right eye and no chance. At 2:20 of the third, a Golovkin right floored Ishida, whose head rested precariously on the bottom rope. The Japanese middleweight was motionless for about a minute before he climbed to his feet. It was his first loss by knockout.

Good luck, Macklin.

DENIS GRACHEV SD 10 ZSOLT ERDEI
March 30, Monte Carlo, Monaco (Integrated Sports PPV)

★ After upsetting Ismayl Sillakh and then pushing Lucian Bute to the brink last year, Denis Grachev caught the eye of the boxing world.

With a split-decision victory over Zsolt Erdei in the "Monte Carlo Million Dollar Super Four" – by scores of 96-94, 96-94 and 94-96 – Grachev firmly established himself as a tough-as-nails contender.

Erdei (33-1, 18 KOs) started off strong, controlling the fight over the first half by creating distance with his jab. He maintained range and forced Grachev to miss with power shots while connecting with well-timed counters. But eventually Grachev's pressure style forced Erdei into more exchanges and the California-based Russian found success, leading to the biggest win of his career. Grachev will face Edwin Rodriguez for the tournament title at a catch weight of 171½ pounds on July 13 in Mon.

Erdei, 38, lost for the first time in his 13-year-career on July 13 in Monaco.

No. 10 EDWIN RODRIGUEZ UD 10 EZEQUIEL MADERNA
March 30, Monte Carlo, Monaco (Integrated Sports PPV)

★ Edwin Rodriguez advanced to the final of the "Monte Carlo Million Dollar Super Four" with a unanimous-decision victory over Ezequiel Maderna in an ugly fight. The scores were 96-92, 96-92 and 95-92.

Rodriguez was the busier fighter, content to wing wild shots, while Maderna, a 2008 Olympian from Argentina, looked to counter.

In the eighth round, Rodriguez (23-0, 15 KOs) drilled Maderna with a low blow that was so nasty that Maderna (19-1, 13 KOs) elected to take the full five minutes to recover. Referee Daniel Van de Wiele docked Rodriguez a point for the foul. The next round, Rodriguez was at it again, this time being penalized a point for a rabbit punch that dropped Maderna. Moments later in the ninth, Rodriguez dropped Maderna to the canvas with a straight right.

No. 7 ISAAC CHILEMBA D12 No. 10 TONY BELLEW
March 30, Liverpool, England (WealthTV)

★ It was fitting that no one was deemed the victor in a fight where neither boxer seemed to take control. Tony Bellew and Isaac Chilemba fought to a split draw in an uneventful fight, with scores of 114-114, 116-112 for Chilemba and 116-115 for Bellew.

Bellew (19-1-1, 12 KOs) was the aggressor and landed the harder shots when he found his target; he clearly won the early rounds. Chilemba (20-1-2, 9 KOs) took over down the stretch, countering well along the ropes and using his speed to land first.

But many of the rounds were tough to score, with neither fighter asserting himself.

The match was a WBC eliminator to determine a mandatory for RING light heavyweight champion Chad Dawson. Chilemba claims that he woke up with the flu the morning of the fight, perhaps explaining his listless performance. The rematch takes place on May 25 in London.

No. 2 JUAN ESTRADA SD 12 No. 1 BRIAN VILORIA
April 6, Macau (HBO2)

★ Brian Viloria's topsy-turvy career was riding a high note after he unified the flyweight belts in a knockout of Hernan Marquez last November. The victory

placed him on the cusp of the pound-for-pound list.

But the affable Hawaiian once again hit a snag against Mexican Juan Estrada, losing a split decision and his WBO and WBA flyweight titles.

Viloria (32-4, 19 KOs) clearly won the first three rounds with clean punching and movement. Slowly but surely, though, Estrada forced Viloria, 32, into brutal exchanges and it was evident that the 23-year-old was the fresher fighter down the stretch.

Viloria's swollen face bore the telltale signs as Estrada (23-2, 18 KOs) connected on power shots and bullied him around the ring. Viloria seemed to be exhausted and was wobbled by some punishing shots in the 12th as he barely made it to the finish.

Estrada is now THE RING's No. 1 112-pounder and is making his mark as a must-see action fighter.

No. 4 ROMAN MARTINEZ SD 12 No. 6 DIEGO MAGDALENO

April 6, Macau (HBO2)

★ Most pundits believed WBO junior lightweight titleholder Roman Martinez received a gift decision over Juan Carlos Burgos in January. Few picked him to beat hot prospect Diego Magdaleno. But here Martinez was again, hand raised and belt around his waist after winning a split decision by scores of 115-112, 114-113 and 111-116.

Martinez (27-1-2, 16 KOs) was stunned in the third round and rebounded to floor Magdaleno in the following frame with a stinging right hand. Magdaleno (23-1, 9 KOs) wasn't badly hurt, but continued to eat right hands in that round.

There were some good exchanges in the fight with many rounds tough to score, but Martinez was the aggressor and pressed the action. There was talk of a possible Martinez-Orlando Salido fight for the fall.

AKIRA YAEGASHI UD 12 RING CHAMP TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI

April 8, Tokyo

★ THE RING's 112-pound title is now around the waist of a fourth fighter in the past year after another upset.

Toshiyuki Igarashi made one successful defense of his belt earlier this year but was shocked by his countryman Akira Yaegashi, who came into the fight as THE RING's No. 6 105-pounder. Yaegashi won a unanimous decision by scores of 116-109, 117-108 and 115-110 in a bloody scrap.

Igarashi (17-2-1, 10 KOs) was the bigger man but failed to utilize range, electing to trade on the inside with Yaegashi.

Yaegashi (17-3, 9 KOs) consistently found his target and controlled the first third of the bout. Igarashi came on over the middle rounds, but both fighters were cut by a clash of heads in the sixth, which seemed to open up the action. Yaegashi battered his foe down the stretch to seal the victory and is now THE RING's flyweight champ.

VICTOR TERRAZAS SD 12 CRISTIAN MIJARES

April 20, Mexico City (Unimas)

★ In an early candidate for Fight of the Year, fellow Mexicans Victor Terrazas and Cristian Mijares waged war for the vacant WBC 122-pound title. One judge saw it for Mijares, 114-113 but he was overruled by tallies of 114-113 and 115-112 for Terrazas.

Terrazas (37-2-1, 21 KOs) was able to bait the superior boxer into a number of wild exchanges and used his size and power to get the better of Mijares on the inside. Mijares (47-7-2, 22 KOs) found success when he was bouncing on his toes and firing jabs at Terrazas in the center of the ring.

With the WBC's open scoring policy, Mijares knew he was slightly down after eight rounds and ratcheted up the pace down the stretch. He threw punishing power combinations in the 11th, cutting Terrazas' left eye before dropping him hard in the 12th, but it wasn't enough to earn the nod on the cards.

No. 9 TYSON FURY KO 7 STEVE CUNNINGHAM

April 20, Madison Square Garden Theater, New York City (NBC)

★ Tyson Fury demonstrated on national network television that his boxing skills are limited to say the least. No one can question his heart, though.

Steve Cunningham, six inches shorter and 44 pounds lighter than Fury, put his 6-foot-9 foe down with a huge overhand right in the second round. It appeared at that moment he might go the way of fellow prospect David Price, who was recently stopped in the second round by Tony Thompson.

Instead, Fury (21-0, 15 KOs) managed to survive and slowly take control of the fight. He used his size and rough tactics to wear down Cunningham (25-6, 12 KOs) before finally taking him out with a clubbing right as the former cruiserweight titleholder leaned on the ropes.

The end came at 2:55 of the seventh round.

No. 2 NATHAN CLEVERLY UD 12 ROBIN KRASNIQI

April 20, Wembley Arena, London (Epix)

★ Everything is beginning to point toward an eventual title-unification showdown between Nathan Cleverly and Bernard Hopkins.

Momentum for that compelling matchup continued to build with Cleverly's near-shutout decision over tough, but overmatched Robin Krasniqi (39-3, 15 KOs) in defense of his WBO belt. The scores were 120-108, 119-109 and 120-108, meaning one judge gave Krasniqi one round.

Cleverly (26-0, 12 KOs) looked a lot like fellow Welshman and Hopkins conqueror Joe Calzaghe, baffling Krasniqi with his speed and all-around ability from beginning to end. The only flaw in his performance might be his inability to score a knockout.

Cleverly would like to face Hopkins, the IBF titleholder, in the U.K. but might target WBA champion Beibut Shumenov in a unification bout first.

FIGHT RESULTS

THROUGH APRIL 21, 2013

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Odlanier Solis W 12 Leif Larsen
Ruslan Chagaev KO 1 Mike Sheppard
Robert Helenius W 10 Michael Sprott
Edmund Gerber W 8 Gbenga Oloukun
Amir Mansour KO 1 Jason Gavern
Glendy Hernandez TKO 8 Dieuly Aristilde
Artur Szpilka TKO 2 Taras Bidenko
Dereck Chisora TKO 9 Hector Avila
Tyson Fury KO 7 Steve Cunningham

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Dmytro Kucher W 12 Julio Cesar Dos Santos
Lukasz Janik W 10 Lars Buchholz
Ilunga Makabu KO 3 Tamas Lodi
Dmitry Kudryashov KO 3 Levan Jomardashvili
Mateusz Masternak TKO 9 Sean Corbin
Jon Lewis Dickinson UD 12 Mike Stafford
Ruben Mino TKO 3 Osvaldo Diaz
Juho Haapoja TKO 1 Michele De Meo
Matty Askin UD 10 China Clarke
Olanrewaju Durodola TKO 4 Victor Barragan

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Adonis Stevenson KO 6 Darnell Boone
Eleider Alvarez KO 3 Nicholson Poulard
Umberto Savigne KO 4 Jackson Junior
Nenad Stankovic KO 4 Hamza Wandera
Denis Grachev W 10 Zsolt Erdei
Tony Bellew D 12 Isaac Chilemba
Azea Augustama TKO 2 David McNemar
Cedric Agnew UD 12 Yusaf Mack
Marcus Oliveira TKO 11 Ryan Coyne
Erik Skoglund UD 10 Luke Blackledge
Sean Monaghan TKO 1 Dion Stanley
Blake Caparello UD 12 Jorge Olivera
Robert Berridge TKO 8 Serge Yannick
Nadjib Mohammedi TKO 3 Hakim Chioui
Nathan Cleverly UD 12 Robin Krasniqi

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Uensal Arik KO 7 Francis Cheka
Don George D 10 David Alonso Lopez
Robert Stieglitz KO 4 Arthur Abraham
George Groves KO 2 Baker Barakat
Edwin Rodriguez W 10 Ezequiel Maderna
Rocky Fielding KO 6 Wayne Reed
Scott Sigmon UD 10 Michael Rayner

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Billy Joe Saunders W 12 Matthew Hall
Lukas Konecny TD 12 Karim Achour
Marco Antonio Rubio W 12 Marcus Upshaw
Andrey Meryasev W 10 Alexey Ribchev
Brian Vera KO 7 Donatas Bondorovas
Gennady Golovkin KO 3 Nobuhiro Ishida
Jarrod Fletcher TKO 6 Randy Suico
Jorge Sebastian Heiland DQ 6 Douglas Ataide
Bruno Sandoval KO 1 Isaac Mendez
Manny Siaca UD 8 Milton Nunez
Billi Godoy UD 10 Valdevan Pereira
Marcos Nader UD 12 Roberto Santos
Marcos Reyes TKO 5 Eric Mitchell
Milorad Zizic KO 2 Francesco Basile
Adam Etches TKO 4 Andrei Abramenka
Gilberto Ramirez Sanchez KO 3 Juan De Angel
Curtis Stevens UD 8 Derrick Findley

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Koji Numata KO 2 Go Nakahori
Luciano Cuello KO 8 Joaquim Carneiro
Omar Chavez KO 2 Pablo Vasquez
Saul Roman KO 9 Jose Pinzon
Joshua Okine KO 3 Gabriel Adoku
Frank Horta KO 2 Jackson Bonsu
Sergei Rabchenko KO 2 Adriano Nicchi
Yuri Foreman UD 6 Gundrick King
Alexis Camacho TKO 12 Gustavo Garibay
Charlie Ota UD 12 Kyung-Suk Kwak
Samuel Vargas TKO 7 Julius Bunda
Marcus Willis MD 8 James De la Rosa
Glen Tapia UD 8 Joseph de los Santos
John Jackson UD 8 Cerresso Fort
Brian Rose TKO 12 Joachim Alcine
Julian Williams TKO 3 Dashon Johnson
Jermall Charlo TKO 4 Orlando Lora
Saul Alvarez UD 12 Austin Trout

WELTERWEIGHTS

Akinori Watanabe KO 6 Cobra Suwa
Souleymane M'baye KO 2 Laszlo Haaz
(F) Eva Halasi W 10 Ivana Habazin
Fredrick Lawson KO 3 Isaac Sowah
Suyon Takayama W 10 Moon Hyun Yun
Sasha Yengoyan KO 6 Sergei Melis
Samuel Colomban UD 12 Leti Leti
Jo Jo Dan UD 8 Damian Frias
Leonard Bundu KO 11 Rafal Jackiewicz
Thomas Dulorme UD 8 Ben Ankrah
(F) Cecilia Braekhus TKO 3 Mia St. John
Mikael Zewski KO 2 Daniel Sostre
Teerachai Kratingdaenggym KO 3 Ronnel Esparas
Roman Belaev TKO 4 Nelson Fabian Pilotti
Lukasz Maciec TKO 5 Jussi Koivula

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Viktor Postol W 12 Hank Lundy
Selcuk Aydin W 10 Giuseppe Lauri
Adrian Granados D 10 Kermit Cintron
Jose Lopez KO 8 Mahonri Montes
Albert Mensah KO 6 Smith Odoom
Terence Crawford W 10 Breidis Prescott
Mike Alvarado W 12 Brandon Rios
Gabriel Bracero UD 8 Pavel Miranda
Antonio Lozada Jr. TKO 9 Jorge Pimentel
Ricardo Alvarez KO 2 Carlos Valdez
Paul Spadafora UD 10 Robert Frankel
Samuel Neequaye KO 2 Arturo Santiago
Ruben Nieto MD 12 Jean Pierre Bauwens
Alberto Mosquera UD 8 Francisco Fuentes
Sergei Fedchenko UD 12 Karim El Ouazghari
Min-Wook Kim UD 12 Shinya Iwabuchi

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Jasper Seroka KO 8 Joey Stiglingh
Ricardo Dominguez W 10 Al Sabaupan

(F) Delfine Persoon KO 2 Kremena Petkova
Derry Mathews D 12 Anthony Crolla
Rustam Nugaev KO 8 Jonathan Maicelo
Pasquale Di Silvio UD 10 Michele Focosi
Bahodir Mamadjonov TKO 9 Angelo Santana
Dejan Zlaticanin UD 12 Petr Petrov
Juan Diaz TKO 6 Pipino Cuevas Jr.
Rey Labao TKO 5 Taisho Ozawa
Daniel Estrada TKO 5 Isaias Sampaio
Liam Walsh UD 10 Scott Harrison
Omar Figueroa KO 1 Abner Cotto

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Devis Boschiero KO 10 Samir Kasmi
Juan Martin Elorde W 10 Maxsaisai Sithsaithong
Ermano Fegatilli W 8 Karim Chakim
Sergio Escobar TKO 3 Vicente Rodriguez
Adrian Estrella TKO 9 Arturo Camargo
Daiki Kaneko TKO 9 Kyohei Tamakoshi
Roman Martinez SD 12 Diego Magdaleno
Paul Fleming TKO 4 Ryusei Yoshida
Takashi Miura TKO 9 Gamaliel Diaz
Romain Jacob UD 10 Leonus Francoise
Juan Manuel Lopez KO 2 Eugenio Lopez

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Chonlatarn Piriyapinyo KO 5 Nathan Bolcio
Josh Warrington W 10 Jamie Speight
Timur Akhundov W 12 Khavazhy Khatsyhau
Akifumi Shimoda D 10 Roli Gasca
Dodie Boy Penalosa Jr. KO 3 Nimithra Sithsaithong
Tyler Asselstine UD 8 Olivier Lontchi
Oscar Gonzalez UD 10 Rico Ramos
Jesus Galicia MD 12 Romulo Koasicha
Chris John D 3 Satoshi Hosono
Simpiwe Vetyeka TKO 12 Daud Yordan
(F) Alejandra Oliveras KO 5 Calixta Silgado
Javier Fortuna KO 1 Miguel Zamudio
Clive Atwell UD 12 Rafael Hernandez
Robinson Castellanos SD 12 Celestino Caballero
Jose Ramirez SD 12 Rey Bautista
Lee Selby TKO 5 Corey McConnell
Bernabe Concepcion TKO 7 Boido Simanjuntak

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Koji Aoki KO 4 Yukihiro Nakamura
Jeffrey Mathebula W 12 Takalani Ndlovu
James Dickens W 10 Jon Fernandes
Masaaki Serie TKO 7 Gabriel Altarejos
Luis Del Valle TKO 5 Andre Wilson
Nehomar Cermeno KO 2 Eduardo Garcia
Yasutaka Ishimoto MD 10 Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.
Ali Hallab KO 5 Sean Hughes
Guillermo Rigondeaux UD 12 Nonito Donaire
Hidenori Otake TD 8 Nobuhisa Doi
Jeremy Parodi UD 12 Genaro Camargo
Victor Terrazas SD 12 Cristian Mijares
(F) Alicia Ashley UD 10 Chanttall Martinez
Andres Gutierrez TKO 5 Salvador Sanchez

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Immanuel Naidjala D 12 Lesley Sekotswe
Joseph Agbeko W 12 Luis Melendez
Vusi Malinga W 12 Diarh Gabutan
Monico Laurente W 12 Elmar Francisco
Petch Kokietgym KO 8 Dondon Jimenea
Mohammed Metualy W 12 Atef Mohamed
Yonfrez Parejo TKO 1 Eddy Zuniga
(F) Irma Garcia SD 10 Janeth Perez
Albert Pagara UD 10 Jessie Tuyor
Nobuo Nashiro KO 6 Yodchanchai Nakornloung Promotion
Mark Anthony Geraldo KO 2 Hirofumi Mukai
Koki Kameda SD 12 Panomroonglek Kaiyanghadaogym
Shinsuke Yamanaka TKO 12 Malcolm Tunacao
Juan Montes D 12 Julio Cesar Miranda
Tomas Rojas KO 6 Jaderes Padua
Hernan Marquez TKO 3 Edgar Jimenez

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Denkaosan Kaovichit KO 12 Eiji Tsutsumi
Jonathan Gonzalez KO 3 Joseph Rios
Oleydong Sithsamerchai KO 7 Richard Garcia
Hiroyuki Hisataka UD 10 Sonny Boy Jaro
(F) Naoko Yamaguchi TKO 7 Loredana Piazza
(F) Debora Dionicius UD 10 Gabriela Bouvier
Jonathan Gonzalez UD 8 Francisco Perez
McJoe Arroyo UD 8 Jairo Hernandez
Arthur Villanueva UD 12 Marco Demecillo
Paul Butler TKO 5 Yaqub Kareem
Ivan Morales UD 8 Raul Hidalgo

FLYWEIGHTS

Nawaphon Por Chokchai KO 4 Joan Imperial
(F) Melissa McMorrow W 10 Nadia Raoui
(F) Arely Mucino W 10 Suri Tapia
Artem Dalakian KO 1 David Kanalas
Oleksandr Hryshchuk TKO 2 Gabor Molnar
Juan Francisco Estrada SD 12 Brian Viloria
Milan Melindo TKO 4 Tommy Seran
Zou Shiming UD 4 Eleazar Valenzuela
Akira Yaegashi UD 12 Toshiyuki Igarashi
Petchbarngborn Kokietgym UD 12 Michael Escobia
Juan Hernandez KO 3 Josue Vega
Pablo Carrillo KO 8 Jose Jimenez
Luis Concepcion TKO 6 Anuar Salas
Ricardo Nunez TKO 3 Michael Arango
Rocky Fuentes UD 10 Juan Kantun

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Jonathan Taconing KO 5 Yodpichai Sithsaithong
Pedro Guevara W 12 Raul Garcia
Ryoichi Taguchi UD 10 Yuki Chinen
Denver Cuello MD 10 Takashi Kunishige
Saul Juarez TKO 1 Arturo Castro
Karim Guerfi TKO 1 Farid Cassiani

STRAWWEIGHTS

Hugo Hernan Verchelli KO 2 Stiven Monterrosa
Wanheng Menayothin W 6 Sammy Hagler
Katsunari Takayama W 12 Mario Rodriguez
(F) Anahi Torres W 10 Jasseth Noriega
Jesus Silvestre TKO 6 Luis Carlos Leon

COMING UP

PREDICITIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND LEM SATTERFIELD.

Marcos Maidana (right, fighting Jesus Soto Karass) and Josesito Lopez figure to put on a good show on June 8.

MAY

DEVON ALEXANDER vs. LEE PURDY

Date: May 18, 2013
Location: Boardwalk Hall, Atlantic City, N.J.
Division: Welterweights (for Alexander's IBF title)
TV: Showtime
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★
Also fighting: Co-feature to Lamont Peterson vs. Lucas Matthysse
Significance: Alexander (24-1, 13 KOs) has beaten Matthysse, Marcos Maidana and Randall Bailey in succession, an impressive streak. Purdy (20-3-1, 13 KOs), who replaced injured Kell Brook, is coming off an impressive TKO of Cosme Rivera but will face by far his biggest test.
Prediction: *Rosenthal* – Alexander KO 8; *Fischer* – Alexander UD; *Satterfield* – Alexander KO 9.

LAMONT PETERSON vs. LUCAS MATTHYSSE

Date: May 18, 2013
Location: Boardwalk Hall, Atlantic City, N.J.
Division: 141-pound catch weight (no titles at stake)
TV: Showtime
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Also fighting: Co-feature to Devon Alexander vs. Lee Purdy
Significance: Peterson (31-1-1, 16 KOs) bounced back from a positive drug test that tainted his victory over Amir Khan by thrashing Kendall Holt in eight rounds in February. Matthysse (33-2, 31 KOs), hungry for a world title, stopped Mike Dallas with one punch in the first round in January.
Prediction: *Rosenthal* – Peterson UD; *Fischer* – Matthysse KO 10; *Satterfield* – Peterson KO 8.

CARL FROCH vs. MIKKEL KESSLER

Date: May 25, 2013
Location: O2 Arena, London
Division: Super middleweights (WBA and IBF title unification)
TV: HBO
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Also fighting: Tony Bellew vs. Isaac Chilemba, light heavyweights
On the same telecast: Lucian Bute vs. Jean Pascal, light heavyweights, Montreal
Significance: Froch (30-2, 22 KOs) has emerged as the bigger star even though he lost to Kessler (46-2, 35 KOs) in 2010, with victories over Arthur Abraham, Glen Johnson and Lucian Bute. Kessler has battled injuries but appears to be healthy going into this compelling rematch.
Prediction: *Rosenthal* – Froch UD; *Fischer* – Froch MD; *Satterfield* – Froch KO 10.

OTHER MAY FIGHTS

MAY 17 – Denis Lebedev vs. Guillermo Jones, for Lebedev's WBA cruiserweight title, Moscow
May 18 – Shane Mosley vs. Pablo Cesar Cano, welterweights, Cancun, Mexico (Fox Deportes)
May 24 – Delvin Rodriguez vs. Freddy Hernandez, junior middleweights, Uncasville, Conn. (ESPN2)

JUNE

CHAD DAWSON vs. ADONIS STEVENSON

Date: June 8, 2013
Location: Montreal
Division: Light heavyweights (for Dawson's RING and WBC titles)
TV: HBO
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★
Also fighting: Yuriorkis Gamboa vs. Darley Perez, lightweights
Significance: Dawson (31-2, 17 KOs) is coming off a crushing defeat

against 168-pound champ Andre Ward but will be more comfortable at his natural weight. He remains formidable. Stevenson (20-1, 17 KOs) is stepping up in class but might have the ability to handle it.

Prediction: *Rosenthal* – Dawson UD; *Fischer* – Dawson KO 10; *Satterfield* – Stevenson KO 8.

MARCOS MAIDANA vs. JOSESITO LOPEZ

Date: June 8, 2013
Location: Home Depot Center, Carson, Calif.
Division: Welterweights
TV: Showtime
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting:
Erislandy Lara vs. Alfredo Angulo, junior middleweights
Significance: Maidana (33-3, 30 KOs) and Lopez (30-5, 18 KOs) are offensive-minded warriors who should make for an explosive show. Maidana is 2-0 since he lost a one-sided decision to Devon Alexander. Lopez is back at a more natural weight after falling to Canelo Alvarez.
Prediction: *Rosenthal* – Lopez UD; *Fischer* – Maidana SD; *Satterfield* – Lopez SD.

PAULIE MALIGNAGGI vs. ADRIEN BRONER

Date: June 22, 2013
Location: Barclays Center, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Division: Welterweights (for Malignaggi's WBA title)
TV: Showtime
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★
Also fighting:
Johnathon Banks vs. Seth Mitchell, heavyweights
Significance: Malignaggi (32-4, 7 KOs) is an underdog even though he holds the title. The excellent but light-punching boxer is 5-0 since he was stopped by Amir Khan. The gifted and powerful Broner (26-0, 22 KOs) has six consecutive knockouts in his run to stardom.
Prediction: *Rosenthal* – Broner KO 6; *Fischer* – Broner UD; *Satterfield* – Broner SD.

OTHER JUNE FIGHTS

JUNE 14 – Bryant Jennings vs. Franklin Lawrence, heavyweights, Bethlehem, Pa. (NBC Sports Net)
JUNE 15 – Gavin Rees vs. TBA, lightweights, Cardiff, Wales
JUNE 29 – Gennady Golovkin vs. Matthew Macklin, for Golovkin's WBA middleweight title, Mashantucket, Conn. (HBO)
JUNE 29 – David Haye vs. TBA, heavyweights, Manchester, England

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— BOC Member José Chegüi Torres

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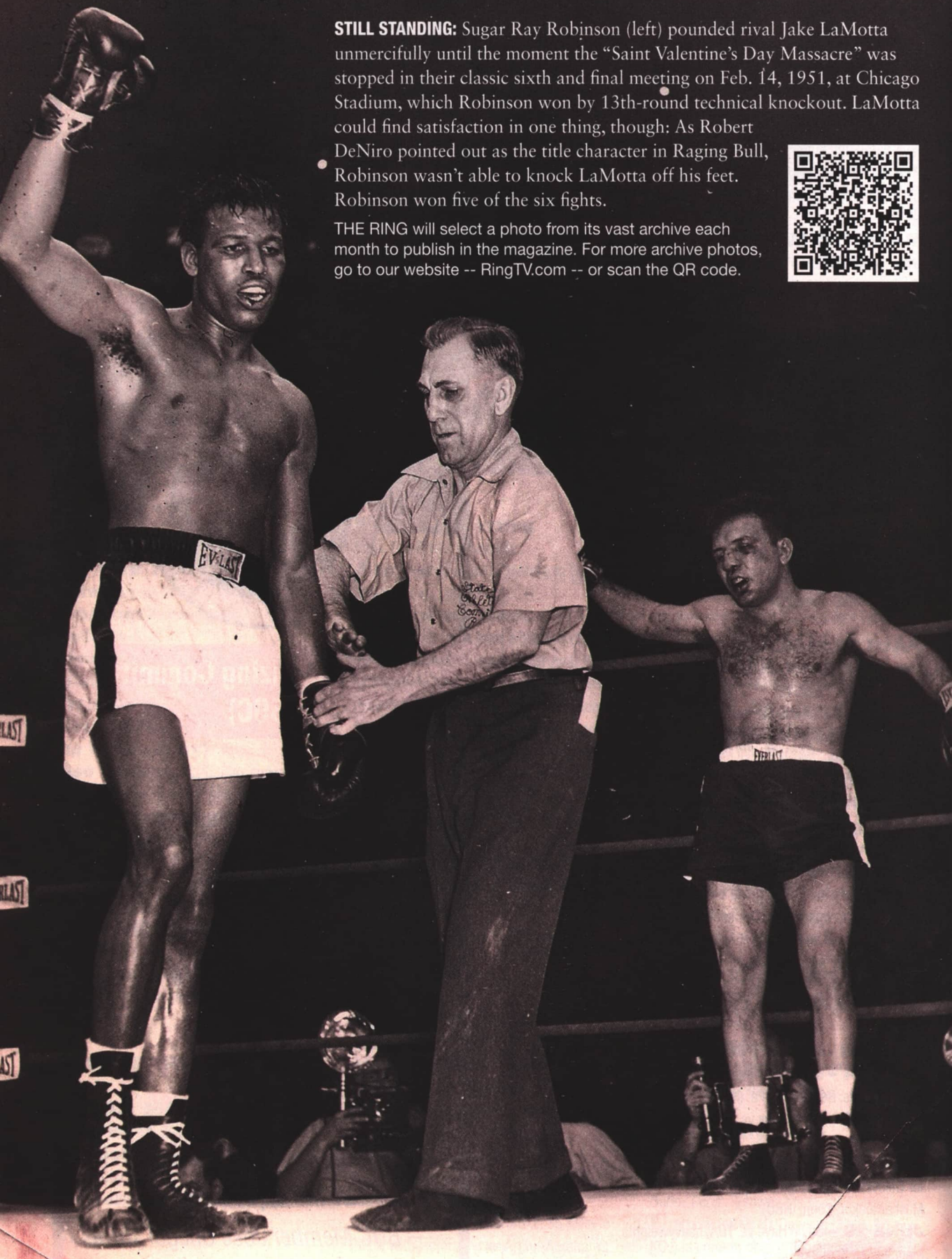

STILL STANDING: Sugar Ray Robinson (left) pounded rival Jake LaMotta unmercifully until the moment the "Saint Valentine's Day Massacre" was stopped in their classic sixth and final meeting on Feb. 14, 1951, at Chicago Stadium, which Robinson won by 13th-round technical knockout. LaMotta could find satisfaction in one thing, though: As Robert DeNiro pointed out as the title character in Raging Bull, Robinson wasn't able to knock LaMotta off his feet. Robinson won five of the six fights.

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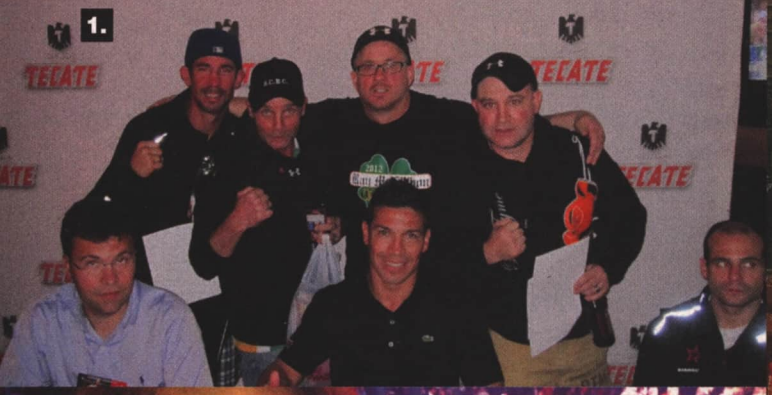
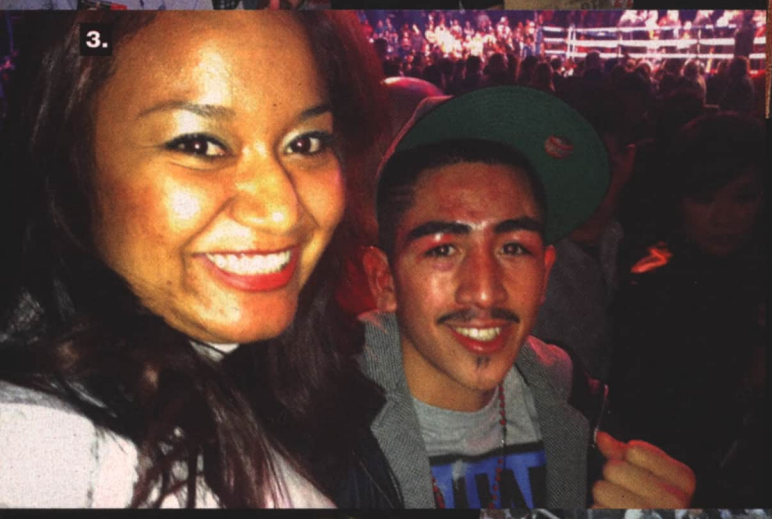
AT THE FIGHTS





1. Sergio Martinez (center) with members of the St. Catharines Amateur Boxing Club in Ontario, Canada. 2. Gina Binns with Sugar Ray Leonard (left) and brother Roger Leonard at a signing for Roger's book "In the Shadow of a Champ" in Annapolis, Md. 3. Cynthia Mendoza with Leo Santa Cruz after his KO of Victor Zaleta in Los Angeles. 4. Malu Morris with Timothy Bradley. 5. Alfredo Armenta (left) and Arthur Singh (right) with Mikey Garcia in Carson, Calif. 6. Ethan Perez, 8, with Canelo Alvarez in San Antonio. 7. Bradley Lancaster (left) with Tyson Fury in London.

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